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OF HIS LIFE AND LETTERS

BY

THE REV. A. R. WHITHAM, M.A.

PRINCIPAL OF CULHAM COLLEGE, HON. CANON OF CHRIST CHURCH
AND EXAMINING CHAPLAIN TO THE PRIMUS OF SCOTLAND

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PROPERTY OF
THE CHURCH ON THE WAY

I dreamed that, with a passionate complaint,
I wished me born amid God's deeds of might :
And envied those who saw the presence bright
Of gifted Prophet and strong-hearted Saint,
Whom my heart loves, and fancy strives to paint.
I turned, when straight a stranger met my sight,
Came as my guest, and did awhile unite
His lot with mine, and lived without restraint.
Courteous he was, and grave—so meek in mien,
It seemed untrue, and told a purpose weak :
Yet in the mood, he could with aptness speak,
Or with stern force, or show of feelings keen,
Marking deep craft, methought, or hidden pride :
Then came a voice—" St. Paul is at thy side ! "

J. H. NEWMAN,
Lyra Apostolica.

PREFACE

ST. PAUL is one of the most fascinating characters in history. Not only as the illuminated mystic, and the great herald of the Catholic Gospel, but as the "man in Christ", he exercises a charm and power which grow with time, and prove ever new to those who are willing to learn from him.

The object of this book is to provide a connected view of St. Paul's life and letters, which may serve as a simple and popular introduction to a closer and deeper study of the Acts and the Epistles. Such study is its own reward, and books of introductory matter are only of real value in proportion as they lead up to and assist it. It is impossible to study even in the most general way such a subject as this without constant reference to the text of the New Testament. But Scriptural references are rarely 'looked up' by the reader, and therefore the most salient portions of the text are printed in full, and in the Revised Version by the kind permission of the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge.

It is difficult to discriminate among the multitude of commentaries, ancient and modern. But the English reader will find much help from Rackham's *Acts* (Oxford Commentaries), and Prof. Ramsay's *Church in the Roman Empire*, and *St. Paul, Traveller and Roman Citizen*. Prof. Kirsopp Lake's *Earlier Epistles of St. Paul* is a most careful, original, and suggestive study not only of the Epistles dealt with, but of the atmosphere and conditions of thought in which they were produced. Another recent book of great value is the *New Commentary* (S.P.C.K.), edited by Bishop Gore.

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CHAPTER I

SAUL THE PERSECUTOR

The Shepherd now was smitten,
The wolf was ravening near :
The scatter'd flock he threatened,
But knew not Whose they were.

OFFICIAL Judaism had shewn its power and seemed to have gained its ends when Jesus of Nazareth was crucified at Passover-time (A.D. 29), and His body laid hurriedly in a rock-sepulchre close at hand. But its triumph was short-lived. A few weeks later saw an astounding outburst of religious faith and fervour among His followers. This was to prove a phenomenon unique in history, "a new thing in the earth"; unique not only in its moral force and its wide and lasting effects, but in its motive-power. For Christianity was not born out of a protest or a reaction against the fanatical malice which had brought Jesus to His death. Nor was it merely the championship of the life and teaching of a great prophet. It sprang from the compelling force of a stupendous and unparalleled fact, to which those who knew it felt they must bear their witness at any cost. The Crucified had risen from the dead. Not only was His tomb found empty, in circumstances which rendered theft impossible; He Himself had been seen and heard and touched. His reappearance on earth was not a vision, but a bodily reality, attested by many witnesses, of all sorts and conditions, on many occasions. He had visibly ascended to heaven, after forty days, with the promise of His return. His followers, no longer crushed, scattered, and terrified, had again

The Resurrection and its effect.

recognised Him as the Messiah and the Son of God. He had become the object of their adoring allegiance and worship. Moreover, they were convinced that on the Feast of Pentecost, ten days after His Ascension, they had been inspired with a new spiritual force, accompanied by outward miraculous signs, in which they recognised the coming of the personal Holy Spirit whom He had promised. And this gift, they believed, carried with it their commission to establish the new 'Kingdom of God' on earth.

At once they began to preach, as men had never preached before, the message of repentance, and forgiveness, and human recovery, by faith in the crucified, risen, and living Lord. The first hundred and twenty followers of Christ in Jerusalem grew at once to thousands, with a common faith and fellowship, with sacraments and ordered worship. Even the miracles of Jesus, the healing of the incurable, the casting out of devils, were reproduced. The new society which thus appeared was not indeed conceived as separate from, and certainly not in opposition to, the ancient Church, the sacred 'ecclesia', or congregation of Israel. Rather it was felt to be its prophesied development and completion. Nevertheless, in St. Luke's brief description (Acts ii. 42), we catch already the notes of the Catholic Church. The opposition of the ruling class, threatenings, scourging, imprisonment, only served to increase enthusiasm. The attacks of chief priests and Sadducees and Sanhedrin dashed themselves in vain against such confidence as this: "We cannot but speak the things which we saw and heard". . . . "We ought to obey God rather than men."

Of this society the Twelve Apostles were the first rulers. But soon its extension and common charities required some devolution of office. So the Twelve appointed the Stephen. Seven (Acts vi.), by the laying on of hands and prayer, the first act of 'Ordination'. One of these Seven was Stephen, a Hellenistic Jew,¹ who at once shewed himself a man of high spiritual gifts. The "faith and power" seen in his miracles, and in "the wisdom and the spirit" by which he spoke called forth adherents and new enemies.

¹ *I.e.* a Jew by race, but speaking more usually Greek: one of a Jewish family which had found a home outside Palestine.

The opposition to Stephen originated in the synagogues of those who like himself were Hellenistic Jews, and probably only occasional residents in Jerusalem. "There arose certain of them that were of the synagogue called the synagogue of the Libertines [*i.e.* 'freedmen', who had once been imperial slaves], and of the Cyrenians, and of the Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and of Asia, disputing with Stephen" (Acts vi. 9).

Among these Jews of Cilicia was the young Pharisee, Saul of Tarsus, a man of high position and remarkable gifts, a Roman citizen, a Greek scholar, but a fanatical zealot for the strictest form of Judaism. Of Jesus of Nazareth, His brief career as prophet and wonder-worker, His tragic death, and reputed resurrection, he had apparently known only by hearsay. But coming to Jerusalem shortly after these events, he was roused to indignation by what must have seemed to him the presumption and disloyalty of the "sect of the Nazarenes", as they were contemptuously styled. Out of the depths of their Galilaean ignorance, as he thought, they were defying the authority of high priest and Sanhedrin, preaching the monstrous doctrine that a crucified blasphemer was Lord and Christ. They were dangerous persons, for they were drawing converts in large numbers, even from the members of the priesthood; they were favourably viewed by the mass of the people; and they were setting up the claim of the carpenter's son even against Moses himself. Such conduct must have seemed to this learned and fiery enthusiast for the Law to be mere madness and profanity, a treason to all the past and all the hopes of Israel.

But like his brother Hellenists, Saul found in Stephen more than his match in controversy. Stephen had not only the natural gift of eloquence, but he possessed some indefinable endowment of 'power', which men felt to be supernatural. Worst of all in argument, foiled by the preacher's personality, the opposition to Stephen took the same course, and displayed the same spirit of malice and falsehood which had inspired the attack on Jesus Himself. Intrigue, secret delation, appeals to the prejudice and violence of the mob, the bribing of false witnesses, led to Stephen's arrest, and a formal charge before the Sanhedrin of blasphemy against Moses and against God, against the Temple and the Law.

Saul of
Tarsus.

The
arrest of
Stephen.

One would gladly believe that Saul, whose later life and self-revealing letters shew him, whatever his faults, to have been a man of sincerity and honour, took no personal part in these dishonest methods. But it is difficult to set limits to the influence of party spirit. Saul certainly approved of what followed Stephen's arrest. He was probably himself one of the Sanhedrin. He apparently gazed unmoved (though he remembered it afterwards) on the illuminated face of the accused, "as it had been the face of an angel", when he stood before his judges. He was untouched by the eloquent survey which Stephen made in his defence, of Israel's continual rebellion against conscience and the voice of God. The martyr, feeling perhaps the lack of sympathy of his audience, broke off into the indignant protest :

"Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute? and they killed them which shewed before of the coming of the Righteous One; of whom ye have now become betrayers and murderers; ye who received the law as it was ordained by angels, and kept it not" (Acts vii. 51-53).

It was enough. In a transport of fury the assembly rushed upon him, 'stopping their ears' to the martyr's enraptured words: "Behold I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God." They dragged him out of the city, and, without even waiting to pass sentence, stoned him to death. And Saul evidently approved. He stood by, and performed the official act of guarding the clothes of the (false) witnesses who cast the stones. He heard the martyr's last words of prayer and forgiveness: "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit". "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." "Saul was consenting unto his death", says the historian. His own confession confirms it: "When the blood of Stephen thy witness was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting, and keeping the garments of them that slew him" (Acts xxii. 20).

Saul's rage was only whetted for fresh victims. He shewed himself so ready and eager to follow up Stephen's murder by an attack on the Nazarenes generally, that the Sanhedrin thought him just the instrument they needed to finish the work, and

stamp out all the disciples of Jesus. The moment seemed favourable, for there was probably no Roman procurator. Pilate had been recalled to Rome, and his successor had not been appointed. A general persecution began that very day, and Saul was the leading spirit: he "made havoc of the Church, entering into every house, and haling men and women, committed them to prison". Again, his own confession is clear:

Saul
perse-
cutes the
Church.

"I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. And this I also did in Jerusalem: and I both shut up many of the saints in prisons, having received authority from the chief priests, and when they were put to death, I gave my vote against them. And punishing them oftentimes in all the synagogues, I strove to make them blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto foreign cities" (Acts xxvi. 9-11).

Such is the first miserable scene in Saul's history. The blow was at hand which would turn his life upside down, and set a mark on all the future history of the Church and the world. But before it is described, it will be interesting to collect what evidence we possess as to Saul's antecedents and training.

Saul was no ordinary man, either in natural genius or in education. He combined in himself the effects of the three great influences which were moulding contemporary civilisation and thought. By birthplace and home associations he was in touch not so much with the Greeks as with the larger world of 'Hellenism'. Greek language, culture, literature had for more than three centuries penetrated and refined the life of Egypt and the near East. The Romans themselves had been taken captive by the same fascination. Tarsus, the capital of Cilicia, was practically a Greek city, both in its learning and its commercial enterprise. It had the natural advantage of a good harbour, and the command of the trade-route into the centre of Asia Minor. It also possessed a university, which ranked next to those of Athens and Alexandria. Saul, at this time in the prime of life (probably about 35), was a 'citizen' of Tarsus, which implies that his family had been established there for some time and were in a good position. Doubtless all his life he had been familiar with the Greek tongue, and with Hellenic

Saul the
Hellenist.

thought and literature. He quotes naturally from Greek poets : from Aratus to the Athenians (Acts xvii. 28), from Menander to the Corinthians (1 Cor. xv. 33), from Epimenides to Titus (Tit. i. 12). His speech at Athens shews both respect for and profound sympathy with the aspirations of Greek philosophy. His close and favourite companion and biographer, St. Luke, was a scholarly Greek physician. The Greek in which he wrote or dictated is second only to that of St. Luke. Its faults are not those of scholarship, but of an impetuous spirit, whose thoughts often run too fast for the pen.

But Saul was a Roman too. He was in touch with that magnificent influence which had succeeded where the Greeks had signally failed : the unifying, peace-making, legislative genius of the Roman Empire. By birth he was a ' citizen ' of Rome. His family before him had received this privilege of *civitas*, probably for some eminent service to the Roman government.

It was to this probably that he owed his double name, introduced at first sight so curiously and abruptly in Acts xiii. 9. Like many Jews, he had in addition to his Hebrew name a Latin name also, which in sound resembled it. He was Paulus or Paul as well as Saul, and as soon as his changed life brought him into direct connection with the heathen world, it was by the former name that he became almost exclusively known. Perhaps, too, he wished to relinquish the name which had been associated with his life as a persecutor.

Thus from his earliest years Saul was within the charmed circle of liberty and imperial ideals. Jew, Greek, and barbarian alike felt the power of the spell of Rome's domination. But only the Roman ' citizen ' could feel himself personally one of the rulers of the world, an actual sharer in Rome's great vocation, " to rule the nations and to lay upon them the law of peace ".

But neither of these two great influences, though they humanised him and widened his outlook, really made Saul of Tarsus. He was, above all, a Jew, " a Hebrew of Jews. the Hebrews ". Heart and soul he belonged to that mysterious race which then, as now, spread everywhere and yet retained the secret of its separation. The Jews had set their mark

on the life and commerce of the Empire. But their greatest contribution to the progress of humanity was *religion*. The Jews were at this time attracting both Greeks and Romans, in spite of themselves, amidst the general break-up of the older heathen worships, by their severe monotheism, their sense of sin and righteousness, and their devotion to their Law.

A Jew by race and training, Saul, in spite of all his amazing experiences and his complete break with formal Judaism as a system, in spite, too, of all his bitter sufferings at the hands of his compatriots, always remained loyal in affection to Israel. He seems even to have retained his pride of race and his faith in their divine vocation. So he writes to the Romans :

“ I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience bearing witness with me in the Holy Ghost, that I have great sorrow and unceasing pain in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were anathema from Christ for my brethren’s sake, my kinsmen according to the flesh : who are Israelites ; whose is the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises ” (Rom. ix. 1-4). . . . “ I say then, Did God cast off his people ? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God did not cast off his people which he foreknew ” (Rom. xi. 1-2).

His education had been in spirit Jewish rather than Greek, and in accordance with the strictest form of the conservative traditions of Palestine. Though he combined in himself both the Hellenistic and the Palestinian Jew, his sympathies were with the latter ; he was no “ liberal ”. For he had studied in Jerusalem, the very centre of correct Judaism, “ at the feet of Gamaliel ”, who was the greatest living exponent of Jewish orthodoxy, though a tolerant and large-minded teacher. Jerusalem seems indeed to have been Saul’s second home. His sister lived there, apparently in good position and in touch with the ruling officials (see Acts xxiii. 16). His sympathies were entirely with the Pharisees : he claims to have been himself one of the strictest of them. He shared not only their devotion to the Law and the ‘ traditions ’, but their expectation of the ‘ Kingdom of God ’, and their belief in the resurrection of the dead. It has been often assumed from Acts xxvi. 10, ‘ I gave my vote ’, that he was a member of the Sanhedrin, the

supreme council of the Jews. Whether that was so or not, he was clearly recognised as a man of weight and position, despite his youth ; and in years to come he could confidently assert that his life had been well known to all Jews from the beginning.

Whether Saul really found satisfaction for his intense religious yearnings in the rigorous system of Pharisaic Judaism is indeed another question. In later years he clearly recognised that he had not done so. Doubtless Rom. vii. 7-24 reflects his own experience and his inward conflicts of conscience : " For I delight in the law of God after the inward man : but I see a different law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity under the law of sin which is in my members ". But at the time of the martyrdom of Stephen there is really no evidence that Saul had any outlook beyond Judaism, any secret attraction towards Christ, or any misgivings that the path of salvation was not to be found exclusively within the narrow lines of the Pharisaic ideal.

Such, then, in training and character was the man who, at this first crisis in the history of the Christian Church, stood forth as the arch-enemy and persecutor ; the champion of the same intolerant Judaism which had rejected and crucified Jesus. So virulent was his opposition that he asked official sanction to continue the work of persecuting the scattered Christians. " But Saul, yet breathing threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, and asked of him letters to Damascus unto the synagogues, that if he found any that were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem " (Acts ix. 1-2).

Such, too, was the man whom a voice, speaking out of another world, was about to proclaim ' a chosen vessel ' for preaching in its most Catholic aspects the faith which he was now so hot to destroy. As the three languages on the Cross announced in mockery, but with the profoundest significance, the world-wide claims of the Crucified, so Saul of Tarsus, Greek scholar, Roman citizen, ' a Pharisee and the son of a Pharisee ', was destined to be the universal herald of that Cross, which was to the Jews a scandal, to the Greeks foolishness, and to the Romans madness. (1 Cor. i. 23 ; Acts xxvi. 24.)

CHAPTER II

SAUL THE CHRISTIAN

The ravening wolf rushed forward
Full early to the prey :
But lo ! the Shepherd met him,
And bound him fast to-day.

AS Saul on his savage errand was approaching the beautiful and ancient city of Damascus, an amazing experience befell him. It is three times described in the Acts. No doubt all these accounts are derived at first hand from the man himself ; and though they differ slightly in details, they are substantially the same. The first, in Acts ix., is that given by the historian St. Luke : the others, in xxii. and xxvi., are quoted as Saul's own words, the one a speech in self-defence addressed to a mob of his own countrymen at Jerusalem ; the other a more formal and studied defence delivered before a legal tribunal at Caesarea, in the presence of King Agrippa and the Roman governor Festus. The following is St. Luke's account, with the chief variations in the others inserted in brackets :

The
Heavenly
Vision.

“And as he journeyed, it came to pass that he drew nigh unto Damascus [about noon] : and suddenly there shone round about him a light out of heaven [above the brightness of the sun] : and he fell upon the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him [in the Hebrew tongue], Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me ? And he said, Who art thou, Lord ? And he said, I am Jesus [of Nazareth] whom thou persecutest [it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks (goads)] : but rise, and enter into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do. And the men that journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing the voice, but

beholding no man [or 'saw the light and were afraid, but they heard not the voice of him that spake'.¹] And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw nothing; and they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus. And he was three days without sight, and did neither eat nor drink."

The simplicity and dignity of this narrative give it the stamp of truth. No explanation of so astounding a change in such a career is adequate except the plain and obvious one. **Was it real?** that this vision was an objective reality. It was a real continuation of the experiences of the Apostles during the forty days after the Resurrection. It was a breaking-in upon the world of sensible experience of a direct revelation from the spiritual world. Jesus Himself, ascended and glorified, but still human, was seen and heard. He Himself was taking the persecutor in hand, and telling him that his attempts to stamp out Christians were an attack on Christ Himself. Saul was spending his strength with as little profit and as much pain as the labouring ox that kicks against the goad.

If the facts of Saul's subsequent life seem to compel an acceptance of this vision as a reality, still more do the effects of that life in their place and power in the world's history. For history is tested not merely by the critical examination of records, but by results. If the birth of Christianity and the part which it has played on the stage of time cannot be explained by any theory of hallucinations or ghost-seeing on the part of the original witnesses of the Resurrection, no more can the tremendous issues of Saul's conversion be attributed, except by an incorrigible trifler, to any mere physical or psychic origin. Whatever it was, it was more than a subjective experience. "Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?" is his own challenge flung out to the world, and he evidently regards it as unanswerable. If he did *not* see the glorified Jesus in that overwhelming flash of light, if he did *not* hear His voice calling him by name, there can be no certainties in history. We cannot think that an experience which ran counter to all the man's past, and to all his convictions, which

¹ There is no real discrepancy here. The Greek shews clearly that the meaning of the second passage is that the attendants heard a noise, but could not distinguish the words spoken.

has left its mark on all the ages that followed, was caused by disordered nerves or fantastic meditations.

Stunned and blinded by "the glory of that light", Saul was led by the hand of his attendants into Damascus, to a lodging in the house of one Judas, in "the street called Straight". Here, in darkness, taking neither food nor drink for three days, he wrestled with the tremendous truth which had forced its path into his soul. At last his spiritual agony found relief in prayer, and doubtless a prayer which accepted his new vocation as the will of God. It was Saul's Gethsemane, and the messenger of comfort was at hand.

Though his conversion had been miraculous, he must enter the Kingdom of God by the normal and appointed way. Conviction of sin, repentance, and faith must be followed by baptism. Apparently the head of the Christian community in Damascus was the "disciple" Ananias, himself a Jew by birth, and respected for his piety by the Jews of the city. He, too, had his supernatural visiting. Christ Himself in a vision bade him seek out Saul of Tarsus, and restore him to sight. It was a Divine communication of another order from the terrible experience of Saul; it was rather such a vision or dream as the Old Testament prophets so often experienced. But it was clear and insistent. When Ananias ventured to expostulate at being sent to one who was known only as a persecutor of the saints of Jerusalem, and an envoy with authority to put in chains all at Damascus that called on Christ's name, the answer came in those memorable words which still thrill the Church: "But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles and kings, and the children of Israel: for I will shew him how many things he must suffer for my name's sake" (Acts ix. 15).

Entering the house of Judas, Ananias laid his hands on the blinded sufferer, the sign of sacramental healing, addressed him as already, in will, one of the Christian society, "Brother Saul", and announced that He who had appeared on the Damascus road had Himself sent His minister to reconcile the penitent.

"The Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way which thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy

Darkness
and
prayer.

The
mission
of
Ananias.

The
Baptism
of Saul.

sight and be filled with the Holy Ghost." An outward sign bore witness to the Divine acceptance. "Straightway there fell from his eyes as it were scales ; ¹ and he received sight forthwith." He must now receive the initial Sacrament of the Church, making his profession of faith. "And now, why tarriest thou ? Arise, be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord " (Acts xxii. 16). Thus Saul entered the new world of forgiveness and peace, gifts which the Law could never give, and of which he was afterwards to tell his Corinthian converts : " If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature ; the old things are passed away ; behold they are become new." Doubtless, then, he received also that second laying on of hands by which the gift of the Holy Spirit, completing and sealing his Baptism, was conferred, and which the Church of to-day knows as Confirmation. He "received meat and was strengthened", first, no doubt, the supernatural food of the Eucharist, and then the bodily food, of which he must have been sorely in need.

What was the immediate effect of Saul's vision upon himself ? The full answer is hidden in the depths of the three days' darkness ; we can however be sure, in the first place, that Saul's vocation. it revolutionised his own personal attitude towards God. He knew himself as a sinner, and he knew God's mercy. And he recognised Jesus of Nazareth not only as the Messiah of his nation, but as the Son of God, the Saviour, the mediator of God's forgiveness and grace, and as his own absolute Lord and Master. His own words had expressed a fundamental change of mind, "What shall I do, Lord ?" Henceforth his own title for himself is "the slave of Jesus Christ".

But in addition to this "conversion" of soul, he probably (as well as Ananias) received from the beginning some Divine intimation as to his new vocation. He was to be called for a work beyond the old limits of Israel. To preach Christ to the Gentiles was to be his special and characteristic task.

To accept this would be the most forcible rooting up conceivable of old beliefs and prejudices, and may have well been one of

¹ The words seem to imply that these 'scales' were physical and not metaphorical. His inward eyes had been opened already. The 'scales' were apparently some film or obstacle to sight which had formed upon the eyes in consequence of the blinding nature of the heavenly light. It is thought that St. Paul suffered from weakness of sight during the rest of his life (see p. 26).

the hardest struggles which had to be fought out in the three days' darkness before Ananias and baptism could come to him. It seems that from the first he realised this vocation, though subsequent revelations and the leading of events made it clearer. For example, in his defence before Agrippa and Festus (Acts xxvi.) he gathers together all the experiences of his ministry and places them as part of his first call at the moment of conversion. Immediately after the exalted Jesus has made Himself known, He is then represented as saying: "But arise, and stand upon thy feet: for to this end have I appeared unto thee, to appoint thee a minister and a witness both of the things wherein thou hast seen me, and of the things wherein I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom I send thee" (Acts xxvi. 16-17).

Israel indeed must always come first. The first testimony of the converted persecutor was delivered to the Jews in the synagogues of Damascus. And this testimony was uncom-
Arabia.promising. Not merely did he proclaim to them that Jesus was the Christ, the Messiah, but that He was "the Son of God". But apparently, even before that work could be performed, a period of retirement and communing with God had to come to deepen his vocation and enlarge his vision. Though St. Luke does not allude to it, and apparently compresses into one two periods at Damascus, Saul himself, in an undoubted epistle (Gal. i. 17), states that he "went away into Arabia". To what region and for how long is unknown. It may have been that, like Elijah of old, he sought out the ancient place of the Law-giving, "Mount Sinai in Arabia".¹ He himself seems to have looked back upon this unrecorded time in Arabia as a testimony to the independence of his apostolic office. He learned Christ there, not mediately through the Twelve, and other teachers of the Early Church, but directly from the fountain-

¹ Arabia was outside the Roman Empire. It was the kingdom of the Nabataean Arabs, extending from the Euphrates to the Red Sea, and had Petra as its capital.

Prof. Kirsopp Lake (*Earlier Epistles of St. Paul*) is of opinion that this visit to Arabia was for the purpose of preaching the Gospel, and that this accounts for the attack made upon him at Damascus at the instance of King Aretas. But it seems, on the face of it, unlikely that the first preaching after the conversion should have been to a heathen people, and there is no hint of such preaching in the New Testament.

head. His grasp of the Christian Faith came to him, like St. Peter's confession (St. Matt. xvi.), not from any human source, but by personal revelation from God. "But when it was the good pleasure of God, who separated me, even from my mother's womb, and called me through his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the Gentiles; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were Apostles before me: but I went away into Arabia; and again I returned unto Damascus" (Gal. i. 15-17).

At Damascus, his preaching of Christ roused in the synagogues first amazement and then bitter opposition. "Is not this he", asked the Jews, "that made havock of them that called on this

Damascus. name, and he had come hither for this intent that he might bring them bound before the chief priests?"

They found his arguments, however, unanswerable, and, as usual, attempted by underhand methods to silence him. Finally, "after many days" (three years, Gal. i. 18), his life was seen to be in peril, for he had been reported as a dangerous person to the Arabian king, Aretas or Hareth, of Petra, who seems at this time to have had some authority over Damascus. The 'ethnarch' or governor was instructed to apprehend him, and an armed force watched the gates of Damascus night and day to seize him if he tried to escape; "but his disciples took him by night, and let him down through the wall, lowering him in a basket". This strange escape from peril of death seems to have made a painful impression on Saul. Years after (2 Cor. xi. 32-3) he singles it out as if typical of his "infirmities", rather than of his sufferings. It was an adventure that might easily have exposed him to ridicule, and so, to his mind, have damaged the influence of his preaching.

From Damascus he proceeded to Jerusalem, wishing to declare himself there as one of the Christian brotherhood which before

Saul at he had persecuted; and especially desiring, as he states
Jeru- himself (Gal. i. 18), to make the acquaintance of the
salem. chief of the Twelve, Cephas or Peter. But at Jerusalem

he found at first no welcome: "they were all afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple". The memories of the persecution and of Saul's prominence in it were too recent. Perhaps, too, in the scattered and disorganised state of the Church after that event, and the constant fear of treachery, the various Christian

communities knew little of each other, and believed little of what they heard.

A mediator appeared in the person of Barnabas—the new name (“son of exhortation”) which Christian affection had given to the wealthy Levite, Joses, who, in the first days of struggle with the Sanhedrin, had thrown in his lot with the Apostles, and freely bestowed on the Church all his possessions (Acts iv. 36-7). This man, one of the most beautiful and gracious figures in the early history of the Church, apparently knew and believed all the story of Saul’s conversion, and his subsequent witness to Christ. He “took him and brought him to the Apostles”. Saul was now recognised as a brother, and lived for fifteen days apparently as the guest of Peter, and on familiar terms with the Christians of Jerusalem; though he tells the Galatians that he saw none of the Apostles except Peter and ‘James, the Lord’s brother’ (Gal. i. 19), that step-brother or cousin of Jesus who was the official head of the Jerusalem Church. During this brief stay at Jerusalem Saul took up, as it were, the work of the martyred Stephen; he boldly addressed his witness especially to the Hellenist Jews. But again his life was in danger—the Hellenists “went about to kill him”. The Christians, anxious no doubt to avoid another outburst of fanaticism and persecution, arranged for his conveyance to Caesarea, and thence to his own home at Tarsus.

A vision of Christ, seen while he was praying in the Temple, helped Saul himself to consent to this hasty flight, while it also kept him in mind of the great vocation which was yet to be developed. “And it came to pass, that, when I had returned to Jerusalem, and while I prayed in the temple, I fell into a trance, and saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: because they will not receive of thee testimony concerning me. And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee forth far hence unto the Gentiles” (Acts xxii. 17, 18, 21).

This allusion to a vision illustrates a remarkable aspect of St. Paul’s personality. He seems to have had many of those mysterious communications from the spiritual world which, in the Old Testament, were granted to the prophets, especially to Ezekiel. St. Paul was very reticent on the matter, and seldom

alludes to such psychic experiences. But the vindication to the wayward Corinthians of his apostolic authority wrings from him, almost in spite of himself, this confession : " I know a man in Christ, fourteen years ago (whether in the body, I know not ; or whether out of the body, I know not ; God knoweth), such a one caught up even to the third heaven.¹ And I know such a man (whether in the body, or apart from the body, I know not ; God knoweth), how that he was caught up into Paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter " (2 Cor. xii. 2-4).

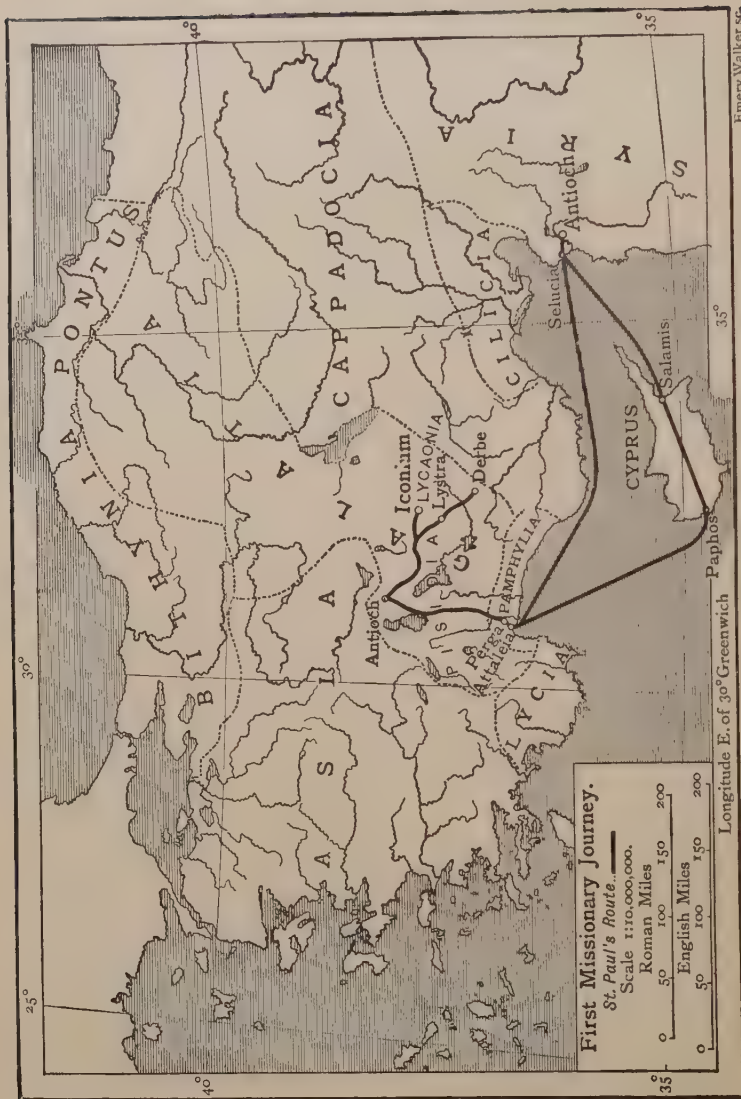
This was probably written in the year 54, which would carry back this mysterious " rapture " to the period of retirement and unrecorded work in Tarsus and Cilicia which followed his visit to Jerusalem. Reverence and awe prevent the seer from attempting to describe further these strange spiritual experiences. He will not even express an opinion as to whether his spirit had actually left the body for the time and entered into the heavenly regions, or whether the revelation was made directly to his spirit while still remaining with the body. The same uncertainty hangs over the experiences of the prophets and the " mystics ". We do not know enough either about the human soul, or the pathways of revelation, to attempt to fathom it.

Thus he ended his first stay at Jerusalem after his conversion, without being personally known to the scattered Christians of Judaea ; " they only heard say, He that once persecuted us now preacheth the faith of which he once made havock ; and they glorified God in me " (Gal. i. 23-24).

Now follows a period of considerable length, probably some eight years, in " the regions of Syria and Cilicia ", in which he was no doubt engaged in preaching Christ. It would indeed be interesting to know something of Saul's work in his own birthplace, Tarsus. From later allusions to " Churches in Cilicia " (Acts xv. 23, 41), we may gather that he was happier than his Master in finding some honour as a prophet in his own country. Later on, in the third century, Tarsus appears as the see of a metropolitan bishop (Eusebius vi. 46).

¹ " The third heaven " was a Jewish expression for that highest spiritual region in which is found the immediate presence of God and His angels : the first heaven being that of the air, and the second of the stars.

This preaching in Tarsus and Cilicia was probably for the most part addressed to the Hellenistic Jews, though it may have included in its scope those Gentiles who had already been attracted to Judaism, and frequented the synagogues. But the full realisation of Saul's life-work as "the Apostle of the Gentiles" was yet to come.



CHAPTER III

THE GREAT MISSION : THE FIRST JOURNEY

Runs not the Word of Truth through every land !
A sword to sever, and a fire to burn ?

 If blessed Paul had stayed
 In cot or learned shade,
 With the priests' white attire,
 And the saints' tuneful Choir,
Men had not gnashed their teeth, nor risen to slay,
But thou hadst been a heathen in thy day.

J. H. NEWMAN.

IT was not either at Damascus, Jerusalem, or Tarsus that Saul was to find the starting-point of his great missionary career, but at the new Christian centre of Antioch. This city on the Orontes, the capital of Syria, founded by Seleucus in 300 B.C., had been from the first the home of a large colony of Hellenistic Jews. In size and power it ranked as the third city in the Empire, commanding the trade route from Assyria to the Mediterranean. It was full of vigorous life, and beautiful both in buildings and surroundings.¹ Hence had come one of the Seven (Acts vi.), Nicolas, "a proselyte of Antioch": and it had been touched by missionaries of Christ soon after the martyrdom of Stephen. These were "men of Cyprus and Cyrene", and with their preaching began a most important development. The first scattered heralds of the Gospel had addressed the Jews only, but these began to speak of "the Lord Jesus" to "the Greeks", *i.e.* probably in the first instance to these "god-fearing" Gentiles who attended the synagogue

¹ Antioch was destroyed in the thirteenth century by the Mohammedans, and it is now only a small town, Antakia, surrounded by the ruins of its former greatness.

service, but did not accept circumcision. It was a momentous decision and it was immediately justified by success. "The hand of the Lord was with them and a great number that believed turned unto the Lord" (Acts xi. 21). This was the beginning of that Church of Antioch which was soon to take the place of Jerusalem as the metropolis of the Church.

Meanwhile the great problem of whether the Gentiles were eligible for baptism had been faced by St. Peter himself, in the case of the centurion Cornelius and his household at Caesarea. Not only his vision at Joppa (Acts x.), but the outward proof of the gift of the Holy Spirit had convinced him that a new era in the purposes of God had begun. And he had vindicated his action to the strict Jewish believers at Jerusalem: "Who was I, that I could withstand God?" Even they for the moment had professed themselves satisfied. "And when they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life" (Acts xi. 18).

The Christians of Jerusalem were deeply interested in the success of the Gospel at Antioch, and sent Barnabas to assist in **Barnabas and Saul at Antioch.** and organise the work. His gifts were eminently suitable for this, and he proved himself a true "son of exhortation", "who, when he was come, and had seen the grace of God, was glad; and he exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord: for he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord" (Acts xi. 23, 24).

Barnabas now took the important step of going personally to Tarsus, to gain Saul as a fellow-worker at Antioch. The latter returned with him, and for a year the two laboured in the work of teaching and building up the newly formed Church. The community did not escape the notice of the busy population of Antioch, nor was it, as in other parts of the Empire, confused with the Jews. "The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." The name, given no doubt at first merely as a popular nickname, marked a turning-point. The Church had assumed definitely a position of independence in the eyes of the world.

Among other Christians from Jerusalem who visited Antioch were some who possessed the gift of 'prophecy'. One of these, named Agabus, foretold truly a coming famine of wide extent,

which occurred during the reign of Claudius, between the years 44 and 48.

The Antiochene Christians were moved in consequence to make preparations for the relief of those who were likely to suffer severely, their brethren in Judaea. The money or corn thus collected was taken later to Jerusalem by Barnabas and Saul, and given to "the elders" for distribution. This, the second visit of Saul to Jerusalem after his conversion, was in the year 44. There is no record of its course, unless it be assumed (as by Prof. W. Ramsay) that it is the visit alluded to in Gal. ii. But this seems improbable. The only event of importance mentioned in this connection is that Barnabas and Saul, having seen the distribution of alms accomplished, took with them back to Antioch "John, whose surname was Mark". This man was a relative of Barnabas, the son of a Mary who had a house in Jerusalem, which was evidently a Christian centre, and sometimes thought to be the house with "the upper room" of the Gospels. John has been identified by many with the "young man" of St. Mark xiv. 51. It is certain that he was the author of the second (and earliest) Gospel which embodies the teaching of St. Peter. He must have had special gifts, including his knowledge of Greek, which suggested his suitability for the missionary work centring at Antioch. Eventually he justified this hope, as the companion and helper both of St. Peter and St. Paul. Tradition also makes him the bishop of Alexandria and the founder of the famous Catechetical School of that city.

But though nothing is told of the two envoys during their stay in Jerusalem, the period, according to St. Luke's narrative, was marked by the outbreak of Herod's persecution, the martyrdom of St. James the great, and the miraculous deliverance of St. Peter from prison and death in answer to the prayers of the faithful (Acts xii.). These events must have made a deep impression on Saul, and prepared him still further for the vocation of struggle and suffering which lay before him, and strengthened him in that sense of the overruling sovereignty and providence of Christ which is so prominent a feature in all his writings.

Another great turning-point was at hand. Saul's peculiar vocation for missionary work among the Gentiles, in regions

where the name of Christ was not known, was now to be more fully disclosed to him, and a supernatural sanction of it given.

The mission to the Gentiles. The occasion is felt by St. Luke to be so important that he clearly makes a new start in his narrative in Acts xiii. 1. He enumerates the eminent "prophets and teachers" who were at work in the Church of Antioch, Barnabas, Symeon called Niger, "the Black", Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen, the "foster-brother"¹ of Herod, and Saul. He describes them as "ministering to the Lord and fasting". The phrase suggests the ordered discipline and worship of a religious community. The word 'ministering' is that which has passed into Christian use in the name 'liturgy', which in the Eastern Church is appropriated to the service of the Eucharist. Evidently the daily "breaking of bread" and "the prayers" which marked the Church from the beginning (Acts ii. 42) were being practised at Antioch in some regular or 'collegiate' manner by the heads of the Christian community. The mention of "fasting" suggests also some season of special devotion; perhaps it was the fast immediately before Easter, a primitive Christian institution, afterwards expanded into the Lent and Passion-tide of the Church's year.

In the midst of this solemn round of prayer and sacramental worship, the voice of the Holy Ghost spoke, mysteriously, but unmistakably. It was revealed to one or more of the Consecration of Barnabas and Saul. "prophets" that His choice had fallen upon two of their number for a new work. "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." A formal act of Church authority, resembling ordination, sealed the Spirit's choice. "When they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away." It was a quiet and hidden action, but it was big with momentous consequences for the Church and the world.

What was the exact nature of this imposition of hands? Opinions will probably always differ. It is often spoken of as being the actual ordination of Saul and Barnabas to the office of 'Apostle', the highest in the Church. This, however, cannot be strictly correct. Nothing is more obvious in Saul's own writings than his conviction that he had received the office of

¹ Perhaps an official title of honour, not to be understood quite literally.

an Apostle directly from Christ Himself, without any human or sacramental mediation. He, like the Twelve, had seen the risen Lord and heard His voice, and had been 'sent' by Him. On the other hand, this did not do away, as we have seen, with the necessity of baptism; and, in this case again, both he and Barnabas must have received some definite gift through the laying on of hands. Such a sacramental act must have been more than a mere benediction. It seems safest to conclude that this ordination at Antioch was of a unique character to meet an extraordinary call. It conveyed a special gift of authority and mission. The Holy Ghost Himself, as He had spoken through human lips, sealed His call by human hands in answer to human prayer. It is significant that while in v. 3 we read, "they sent them away", the following verse identifies this sending with a supernatural impulse: "So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost".

The two departed on their unknown journey, accompanied by John Mark as their "minister", or attendant. [The same title is applied to the 'clerk' or sacristan' of the synagogue (St. Luke iv. 20).] Leaving Antioch, they Cyprus. went down the Orontes to the seaport Seleucia, where they took ship, and landed at Salamis, on the island of Cyprus, the home of St. Barnabas. Here they preached Christ to the audiences hitherto customary in the synagogues, *i.e.* to the Jews, and the Gentile worshippers, or "God-fearers". In this way they traversed the island from east to west until they arrived at Paphos, its capital, a notable and ancient centre of heathendom, famed for the temple and worship of the special goddess of Cyprus, Aphrodite or Venus. Here by the force of circumstances their preaching took a new line, and addressed itself to a high official of the Roman Empire. This was Sergius Paulus, proconsul of the island-province, described as a "man of understanding". He was evidently one who took an intelligent interest in religious problems and teachers. Hearing of the two Apostles, he invited them to speak before him. This was apparently the first time that the Gospel of Christ was laid before the official world of Rome.

But forthwith a new enemy stood revealed. In the suite of the proconsul was one Bar-jesus, otherwise Elymas or Etoimas,

described as a "sorcerer" (or "mage"), "a false prophet, a Jew". The man was typical of a world-wide system of magic and imposture, which in that age of mingled agnosticism and superstition possessed immense influence with all classes of society. No doubt many of these magi might have said with truth, like Shakespeare's soothsayer :

'In Nature's infinite book of secrecy
A little I can read.'

But that little was overlaid with the occult and often immoral arts of the ancient world, necromancy, spiritism, divination ; and these in turn were helped out by a thousand forms of imposture. From the first there could be nothing but war between such a system and the Gospel of light and sincerity. Elymas, we read, "withstood" the Apostles, whether by argument, or ridicule, or magical practices, and shewed himself anxious to prevent the proconsul being influenced by the new teaching. Saul, who from this point onwards in the narrative of the Acts is significantly called by his alternative and Roman name of Paul (p. 6), asserted in the most remarkable manner, inspired by a manifestly supernatural influence, the supremacy of the God of truth over the 'Father of lies'. "But Saul, who is also called Paul, filled with the Holy Ghost, fastened his eyes on him, and said, O full of all guile and all villany, thou son of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord ? And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness ; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand" (Acts xiii. 9-11).

Thus the first great attack of heathenism on the Gospel was broken down and crushed by the stress, not only of Paul's personality and his own conviction, but by the "powers of the world to come" which gave authority to the apostolic office. Just as St. Peter had detected and terribly punished the first disloyalty within the Church, in the case of Ananias and Sapphira, and rebuked the sorcerer Simon, so here St. Paul, as we now must call him, confounded and vanquished the deceits of heathen magic, and whatever lay darkly behind them. The proconsul "be-

lieved ". It is not stated that he was baptized, but at least he felt that the power of the Gospel was a stronger force than the spells of heathendom. He was "astonished at the teaching of the Lord".

Now henceforth Paul is mentioned before Barnabas: he becomes the prominent figure in the missionary travels, and the next move brings him to a sphere of preaching which was to be peculiarly his own.

"Paul and his company." The phrase implied that at least from this point onwards other workers accompanied him besides Barnabas and Mark (possibly St. Luke had joined him), set sail from Paphos, and arrived at Perga on the opposite coast of Pamphylia. They do not seem to have stayed here, but passed northward from that low-lying and enervating district, across the dangerous mountains of Taurus to the city of Antioch in Pisidia. But, apparently at the beginning of this inland journey, John Mark left them and returned to Jerusalem. No reasons are assigned, but St. Paul evidently regarded it as a grave declension, as of one who 'looked back' after putting his hand to the plough. It may have been that the young missionary was alarmed at the dangers that lay before them; or perhaps he could not as yet rise to the ideal of a mission to the Gentile world, which the preaching before Sergius Paulus and the journey into central Asia Minor clearly foreshadowed.

The region which Paul and his company were now entering was the ancient Phrygia, the southern part of the Roman province of Galatia. This name 'Galatia' was applied in later times chiefly to the northern district, which had in the third century B.C. been taken possession of by a Celtic or Gallic race, and was now in St. Paul's time passing under the organisation of Rome. It was to these northern Galatians that St. Paul was formerly supposed by most scholars to have addressed the Epistle to the Galatians. But modern opinion inclines to identify the Galatians thus written to with the inhabitants of the very district which the missionaries are here entering.¹ In that case the Epistle throws some interesting light on the circumstances of Paul's first preaching there. "Ye know," he says, "that because

¹ See Lightfoot, *Galatians*, for North Galatian theory; Sir W. M. Ramsay, *Church in the Roman Empire*, for South Galatia; Kirsopp Lake, *Earlier Epistles of St. Paul*, for a careful study of the whole question.

of an infirmity of the flesh I preached the Gospel unto you at the first, and that which was a temptation to you in my flesh ye despised not nor rejected : but ye received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus " (Gal. iv. 13, 14). From this it has been concluded that St. Paul's rapid retreat inland from Perga towards the mountains of Phrygia was due to an attack of serious illness, perhaps a malarial fever, brought on by overstrain of his work in Cyprus.

It is tempting also to identify this infirmity with that special cross which St. Paul had to bear, which he calls the
The thorn in the flesh. ' thorn ' (or ' stake ') in the flesh, of which he wrote to the Corinthians in remarkable words :

" And by reason of the exceeding greatness of the revelations—wherefore, that I should not be exalted overmuch, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh,¹ a messenger of Satan to buffet me, that I should not be exalted overmuch. Concerning this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he hath said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee : for my power is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my weaknesses, that the strength of Christ may rest upon me " (2 Cor. xii. 7-9).

The exact nature of this " infirmity " is unknown and has been a matter of controversy for ages. Two favourite suggestions have been (1) a weakness of eyesight ; (2) epilepsy. The first is thought to have resulted from blindness at his conversion, and to be borne out by St. Paul's statement that the Galatians were willing, if it were possible, to have plucked out their own eyes and given them to him (Gal. iv. 15). But, on the other hand, on more than one occasion St. Luke hints at the earnestness and powerful effect of St. Paul's look. " His fixed steady gaze was a marked feature in his personality, and one source of his influence " (Ramsay). Epilepsy, to which many of the world's greatest men have been subject, would, from the modern point of view, answer to the case, as being public and humiliating to the sufferer and a hindrance to his work. On the other hand, in the ancient world it might rather, in some circles, have added to his reputation as a prophet and a seer of visions. The oldest tradition is that the infirmity was violent headache (Tertullian). It has been suggested that this

¹ See on " the thorn in the flesh ", the excursus in Lightfoot's *Galatians*, pp. 186-91.

harmonises with the idea that the Pamphylian illness was an attack of malarial fever. But in any case the infirmity was probably some intermittent nervous disorder, causing not only great suffering but complete incapacity for the time for active work. Whatever it was, St. Paul had recovered sufficiently from it at Pisidian Antioch to resume his usual course of attending and preaching in the synagogue.

CHAPTER IV
THE FOUNDATION OF THE CHURCH
OF THE GENTILES

O Abraham ! sire
Shamed in thy progeny ;
Who to thy faith aspire,
Thy hope deny.
Well wast thou given
From out the heathen an adopted heir,
Raised strangely from the dead, when sin had slain
Thy former-cherished care.

J. H. NEWMAN.

ANTIOCH of Pisidia, founded originally by Seleucus, and a city of Hellenic civilisation and beauty, had been made a Roman 'colony' by Augustus. It was therefore bound by special ties to the Roman government, and was a place of great importance. Antiochus the Great had established there, as at the Syrian Antioch, a colony of Jews. Their synagogue had attracted also a number of Gentile hearers, among whom were some ladies of high position. Entering this synagogue on the Sabbath day, Paul and his companions sat down and listened to the reading of "the law and the prophets", *i.e.* to the regular fixed lessons for the day. Presently they were invited by the officials who had charge of the synagogue to speak, if they had "any word of exhortation". Perhaps their appearance suggested that they were men of education in the Law; or possibly some rumour of their purpose in visiting the city had already reached the Jewish elders.

The sermon which St. Paul proceeded to deliver is of high interest, both as the first example of his regular method of addressing a Jewish audience, and for its momentous effects.

Standing up and "beckoning with the hand", he addressed himself to both classes of his hearers, "Men of Israel and ye that fear God", *i.e.* the 'devout', the Gentile hearers and proselytes. He began with a review of the past history of Israel, the Divine vocation, and patience, and the guidance of their forefathers; leading on to the call of David and the promise of a Saviour. This promise had been fulfilled in the birth of Jesus of the seed of David, heralded by John the Baptist and his message of repentance. In ignorance of the real meaning of prophecy, and of the Person of this Saviour Jesus, the Jews of Jerusalem and their rulers had condemned and crucified Him. But His Divine Sonship had been shewn by His Resurrection from the grave. He had been seen 'for many days' by witnesses from Galilee. The promises made through psalmist and prophet had been fulfilled in Him (Ps. ii. 7; Is. lv. 3; Ps. xvi. 10 [already quoted by St. Peter in this sense on the Day of Pentecost]). And this fulfilment of prophecy and of Israel's vocation had a practical and immediate importance. It was the day of Israel's opportunity, and to reject this "salvation of God" would be spiritual ruin.

Salvation
offered to
Israel.

"Be it known unto you therefore, brethren, that through this man is proclaimed unto you remission of sins: and by him every one that believeth is justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses. Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken in the prophets;

Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish;

For I work a work in your days,

A work which ye shall in no wise believe, if one declare it unto you" (Acts xiii. 38-41. Quotation from Habakkuk i. 5).

Forgiveness, justification. This was a characteristically Pauline message; but by no means peculiar to him. It was the burden of all the apostolic preaching, carrying out the teaching of the Lord Himself (St. Luke xxiv. 47; Acts ii. 38, iii. 19, 26, v. 31, x. 43). It summarises the fundamental needs of humanity. Man needs pardon, that he may be reconciled to God, and he needs the gift of holiness: he needs both to be accounted 'just', and to be made 'just'. Not even the highest revelation which had preceded the coming of Christ could give these things. The Law of Moses might point out human sin and the need of righteousness; it might by its sin-offerings and purifications hold out

the promise of pardon for sins of ignorance and infirmity : but for deliberate wilful breaches of God's command it could give no absolution, nor, as St. Paul knew by his own inward experience, could it make man righteous by telling him to be so.

The pages of the prophets glow with splendid promises of pardon and restoration. But these, again, are largely national rather than personal. For full personal forgiveness the prophets point to the Messianic Age (Jer. xxxi. 31-34 ; Zech. xiii. 1).

What St. Paul had to offer to the worshippers in the synagogue at Antioch was a new thing in the religious history of the world, the possibility of full personal pardon for sin, and of grace to attain true righteousness ; and both those through belief in Jesus as the Son of God ; that Jesus whom the religious leaders of Israel had pronounced a blasphemer, and an impostor, and whom the Romans at their desire had crucified. It was a bold pronouncement, and it produced an immediate effect. The Apostles were asked to continue their teaching on the next Sabbath. But meanwhile, so profound was the impression made that they were followed by " many of the Jews and of the devout proselytes ". The Apostles recognised in the attitude of these a clear proof of the work of God's grace, and they " urged them to continue " in it. The next Sabbath saw a tremendous concourse to the synagogue, of " almost the whole city ". But by this time the bulk of the Jews had made their decision. Apparently it was the evident inclusion of the Gentiles in the appeal made by Paul that turned them to make their great refusal. " They were filled with jealousy ", they contradicted Paul's statements, they " blasphemed ", *i.e.* they cast insults upon Jesus.

It was the parting of the ways. The Apostles, too, had to make their decision, and they did so in no uncertain tones.

Salvation offered to the Gentiles. " And Paul and Barnabas spake out boldly, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first be spoken to you. Seeing ye thrust it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying,

" I have set thee for a light of the Gentiles,

" That thou shouldest be for salvation unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts xiii. 46-47. Quotation from Is. xlix. 6.)

To the mind of the Apostles it was no mere question of disputes in theology, or of the traditions of Judaism. The issue was the greatest that can be put before man — eternal life. God's offer of forgiveness and grace through Christ carried with it the whole question of man's destiny. And once the Gospel was seen in this light, there could be no limitations of race and nationality. The Jews indeed had the first claim to hear that message, for which all their history had been the preparation, but in its very nature that message could exclude no one. If they refused it, the Gentile world must have the offer, as even the words of the Jewish prophets themselves had clearly foretold. In this respect the Judaism of St. Paul's time had blinded itself to the lessons of its own greatest and most honoured teachers. The exclusiveness of later Judaism, its fanatical hatred of the Gentile world, its belief in a Messiah who would crush and reduce to slavery all the nations, were contrary to the spirit of the whole Old Testament revelation, and to the clear utterances of the prophets.

Paul's Gentile hearers at Antioch presented the greatest contrast to the Jews. They "were glad and glorified the word of God"; and their belief began to spread beyond the limits of the city, "throughout all the region". Some little time must have elapsed to allow of this spreading of the Gospel, before Jewish animosity came to a head.

The
Apostles
expelled
from
Antioch.

Finally, however, the Jews succeeded in influencing against the Apostles the female proselytes of high rank, and the chief or 'first' men of the city, the board of magistrates, and so "stirred up persecution". Possibly open violence, or beating with rods by the lictors, was resorted to: and eventually the Apostles were expelled from the city. "They shook off the dust of their feet against them", a symbolic act, commanded by Christ Himself, a sign of the judgment and separation from God's mercy, which unbelief had brought on itself.

Turning in a S.-E. direction from Antioch by the Roman road, they travelled some 85 miles to Iconium. So far from being dispirited by their sufferings and apparent failure, it is recorded that they were "filled with joy and with the Holy Ghost". They were conscious of a new influx of spiritual strength and guidance. They knew that some foundations of a church had been laid behind them, and the very opposition they had encountered would be felt

doubtless as a confirmation of the importance of their mission, and as a way of closer union with the Crucified.

Iconium was a different type of city from the one they had just left. It was indeed an important and growing place, on a main

trade route, but its population and character were

Iconium. chiefly Phrygian, with a tinge of Greek civilisation.

Here again, however, was a Jewish colony with its synagogue, which provided the natural centre for the apostolic preaching. A considerable time was spent here : their preaching was of peculiar power, and was supported by miracles ; it won many adherents both among Jews and " Greeks ". But again a violent Jewish opposition manifested itself which influenced many of the native population. " And the multitude of the city was divided : and part held with the Jews and part with the Apostles." Finally, with the connivance of the rulers, a violent onset of mingled Jewish and Gentile opponents was made on the Apostles, who only escaped ill-usage and stoning by a hurried flight southwards towards Lystra and Derbe, cities of the district of Lycaonia, where the Jews were fewer in numbers, and the population were more primitive and heathen in character.

Early Christian tradition has added to this somewhat meagre account of the stay at Iconium the remarkable legend of St.

Thecla. ' The Acts of Paul and Thecla ' in their earliest

Legend of St. Thecla. form date from the second or even the first century, being

stated by Tertullian (Bapt. 17) to have been compiled by a priest of Asia, in order to do honour to Paul ; the said priest, however, was deposed from his office because of his book, either on the ground that it was a forgery or that it contained heretical statements. Probably, however, these ' Acts ' both in their original and later forms had a foundation of fact. Thecla was one of the most venerated saints of the early Church. She is stated to have been converted by St. Paul's preaching at Iconium, to have broken off her betrothal to a heathen, and embraced the life of religious virginity. Twice she was condemned to death, but delivered miraculously from fire and wild beasts. She accompanied St. Paul on some of his later journeys, was herself a preacher of the Gospel, and finally died at the Cilician Seleucia. (See Rackham, *Acts*, pp. 226-7.)

At Lystra the greatest excitement was aroused by a miracle of

healing performed by Paul. The Apostle's supernatural insight discerned the power of faith in one who 'sat' at Lystra, probably a beggar, who from his birth had never been able to walk. Fixing his gaze upon the cripple, he bade him "stand upright" on his feet. The effort of faith followed, "he leaped up and walked". The result is described vividly: "And when the multitudes saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voice, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men. And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercury, because he was the chief speaker" (Acts xiv. 11, 12).

The
miracle
at Lystra.

It was an outburst of indigenous religious feeling. The people of Phrygia were naturally romantic and superstitious. And no doubt they were familiar with the Greek stories of the appearances of gods. Indeed it was to two Phrygian peasants, Philemon and Baucis, that these very two divinities had once appeared. Before the gates of Lystra stood a temple of Jupiter or Zeus. It was perhaps here that the cripple had sat and the miracle had been performed. The priest of Zeus, an important personage, promptly appeared with the sacrificial oxen, wreathed with flowers, and prepared to offer sacrifice not to the unseen Zeus of the temple, but to these two visible deities—Barnabas, whose age and stately bearing and comparative silence pointed him out as "the king of gods and men"; and Paul, shorter in stature, but eager, keen, and eloquent, who was doubtless Hermes (Mercury), the messenger and spokesman of the gods. Such an act of idolatrous worship was appalling to the thoughts of the Apostles not only as followers of Christ, but even as Jews. Barnabas, the Levite, and Paul, the Pharisee, tearing their clothes, the traditional Jewish expression of horror, rushed in among the crowds and, with courteous but most earnest appeal, disclaimed divinity, and prevented the sacrifice being offered.

The summary preserved of their speech shews it as a model of tact and sympathy: "Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and bring you good tidings, that ye should turn from these vain things unto the living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that in them is: who in the generations gone by suffered all the nations to walk in their own ways. And yet he

The
appeal to
Heathen-
ism.

left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave you from heaven rains and fruitful seasons, filling your hearts with food and gladness " (Acts xiv. 15-17).

It was indeed a repudiation of idolatry, but it was an effort, too (as at Athens later), to draw out the fundamental truth that lay beneath the mythology and nature-worship of heathenism ; obscured by countless superstitions and deceits, but recognised by the nobler spirits of the heathen world, and witnessed to still by the hymns and rituals of the temples. Behind nature was the one " living God ", whose beneficence had ever shewed itself in the harvests and natural joys of men, and who had now at last revealed Himself to the nations in the apostolic preaching—no longer suffering them to walk in their own ways of darkness.

The enthusiasm of the mob of Lystra was soon changed to fury. Jews from Antioch and Iconium, with characteristic malignity, followed in the wake of the Apostles, and Derbe. persuaded the people that these men, so far from being gods, were wizards and dangerous characters. This time the Apostles could not escape mob-violence. Paul was overwhelmed with a shower of stones, and, in an apparently lifeless state, dragged outside the city walls. But as his companions stood round he revived, and, with his usual courage, returned to the city for the night. Next day he was sufficiently recovered to be able to go with Barnabas to Derbe, a small town thirty miles away, where again their preaching was successful, and apparently they were unmolested. They made ' many disciples '. Later in the Acts (xx.) one notable example is alluded to—' Gaius of Derbe ', who appears among St. Paul's companions in his third missionary journey.

From Derbe, in spite of all that had happened, the heroic missionaries deliberately retraced their steps, and on their homeward journey revisited Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch in order to consolidate and organise the results of their preaching. Apparently they escaped the mob-violence and stoning of the first visit, and were able to lay firm the foundations of the first Gentile churches. This work was both inward and outward. They " confirmed the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith ". They warned them—and examples would not be

far to seek—"that through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God".

But the Church of God is not merely a collection of believers, it is an organised society with a Divinely given order, of which the bond and safeguard is a properly appointed ministry. "When they had appointed for them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed." This statement is of the highest importance. Each congregation of believers in Christ was to have its spiritual rulers, appointed from above, by the Apostles themselves; the prayer with fasting seems to imply some solemn and lengthy form of preparation and consecration. The title 'elder' or 'presbyter' (the origin of our word 'priest') was derived from the synagogue, but the office was a new one, and distinctly belonged to the new order of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, 'the Spirit of Christ'. At first we hear of the Apostles only as Divinely appointed rulers of the Church, with those, like St. Barnabas, whom some special guidance of the Spirit associated with them. But already the 'elders' of the Church at Jerusalem have been mentioned, who seem to have formed a sacred college of assistants to St. James. Now this office appears in connection with the newly formed Churches of the Gentiles as the normal method of government.

The
appoint-
ment of
Elders.

Doubtless these elders presided over the worship of the Churches, celebrated the Eucharist (probably their first and central duty), taught and baptized new converts, and exercised a general oversight. Some of them possessed also special gifts of prophecy or 'tongues' or miracles, but these things must be distinguished from the normal exercise of the Spirit-given office of the presbyterate. The same office appears a little later under another title, derived from Gentile sources—*episcopos* or overseer. But the presbyter or *episcopos* was clearly subject to the decision and general oversight of the Apostles. He was not a 'bishop' in the later sense. That office was shortly to be developed, just as in the case of the deacon and the presbyter, by devolution from above. The Apostles in the course of their own lifetime were to appoint this higher office, which would carry on their own characteristic functions of rule and laying on of

hands (confirmation and ordination). Such apostolic delegates, though at first often without a fixed sphere of rule, would soon become localised in centres and districts, and so correspond to diocesan bishops (see below, pp. 185-191).

These Churches of Galatia, therefore, were at first in this intermediate state, each with its elder or elders, but still looking to the Apostles for guidance and authority.

Retracing their previous journey, St. Paul and his company passed through Pisidia and Pamphylia. Perga, apparently omitted on the inward journey (for reasons already suggested), was now made the scene of the preaching of the word. Thence, proceeding to Attalia, its seaport, the missionaries set sail on their homeward voyage to Antioch. It is uncertain how long they had been away, but the time suggested by Prof. Ramsay, from the spring of 47 to the summer of 49, does not seem too long for all the momentous happenings. (Rackham assigns a shorter period—the spring of 46 to the autumn of 47.) They had much to tell the Church of Antioch; but St. Luke condenses the welcome they received, and their glad story of the new light which had shone upon the heathen world, in one suggestive sentence :

“And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all things that God had done with them, and how that he had opened a door of faith unto the Gentiles” (Acts xiv. 27).

CHAPTER V

THE GREAT CONTROVERSY

Knowing what the Spirit saith,
Sure of Thee, our Christ Divine,
Lo, we stand by right of faith,
Heirs of Abraham's chartered line.

THE Church at Antioch was, as we have already seen, the first great centre of Hellenic and Gentile Christianity. Here first the essential independence and Catholicity of the Christian Church began to be realised. It was no longer possible to regard the Church as a Jewish sect; nor could the Gentile converts be regarded as in any sense converts to Judaism. Though they were instructed in and encouraged to study the Old Testament Scriptures, this was merely as a help to their faith. They were not circumcised, nor commanded to keep the Mosaic precepts. They met their brethren of Jewish extraction on perfectly equal terms, socially as well as religiously. And in this liberty accorded to the Gentiles, the Hellenist Jews who had embraced Christianity seem for the most part to have acquiesced. Indeed, before their conversion, many of these Hellenists must have been familiar with a tendency to lay stress rather on the moral and spiritual principles of the Law than on its ceremonies. Living far from Jerusalem, and unable to share in the Temple sacrifices, the outward system of Judaism may have had naturally in many cases a looser hold on their consciences than on the conscience of a Jew of Palestine.

Gentile
Christianity.

A conflict between the two ideals was, however, bound to come; and the issue would be vital to the future growth of the Church. The strict Jew of Palestine, the Pharisee, even when

converted, and accepting Jesus as the looked for Messiah, could not think himself out of his old circle of restrictions. He was still a Jew ; he was still under the obligation to observe exactly the Law and to keep himself separate from the Gentile. He had not changed his old beliefs, but only realised his Jewish hopes.

That the Gentiles might be admitted to the Church was indeed already settled. Prophecy had foretold it ; the Lord Himself had sanctioned it by His commission, after His Resurrection, to make disciples of all the nations. SS. Peter and John had admitted the Samaritans by the laying on of hands. Still more significant, St. Peter had baptized the heathen Cornelius and his household. But the Palestinian Jew naturally regarded those Gentiles as admitted not into a new society, but into the law-bound theocracy of Israel. The larger liberty of Antioch and the Pauline missions—the admission of Gentiles to the fullest communion and privileges without circumcision or the acceptance of the Mosaic Law—must have been a real shock.

The growing dissatisfaction of Jerusalem with the Antiochene methods came to a head by the mission, apparently originating with the converted Pharisees, which stands recorded at the beginning of Acts xv. : “ And certain men came down from Judaea and taught the brethren, *saying*, Except ye be circumcised after the custom of Moses, ye cannot be saved ”. SS. Paul and Barnabas stood forth as the champions of liberty. A vehement controversy ensued, of which the upshot was that these two Apostles, with certain others, were dispatched to Jerusalem to discuss the matter at the very fountain-head with “ the Apostles and elders ” of the mother-city. This embassy was of the nature of a Christian progress. The congregations on the route in Phoenicia and Samaria received in turn the envoys, and listened sympathetically to the story of the conversion of the Gentiles. But Pharisaic opposition met them on their official reception by the Church at Jerusalem with the cry : “ It is needful to circumcise them and to charge them to keep the Law of Moses ”. Preliminary discussions led up to a momentous gathering—the Council of Jerusalem in A.D. 48—at which the whole question of the Catholicity of the Church was at stake.

It is probable that this visit to Jerusalem is the one alluded to

by St. Paul in Gal. ii.,¹ fourteen years after the flight from Jerusalem to Tarsus (Acts ix. 30), and which he says he undertook in answer to a Divine revelation. He does not, however, mention the Council, but only the fact that by private conversations he succeeded in convincing SS. Peter, John, and James (the head of the Jerusalem Church), "who seemed to be pillars", that whatever the converted Jew might think of his duty still to observe the Law, the Gentile converts must be left at liberty. A difficulty had arisen in the first instance through the fact that one of the deputation from Antioch was an uncircumcised Greek convert named Titus. The attitude of the Pharisaic party towards him seems to have convinced St. Paul of the bitterness and hypocrisy of their opposition. He speaks of it in vehement language. They were "the false brethren privily brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: to whom we gave place in the way of subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you" (Gal. ii. 4, 5). But whether he made the concession to them of circumcising Titus is impossible to decide: the Apostle's words in Gal. ii. are ambiguous. The context seems to imply that he did, but not as a matter of compulsion, rather as a voluntary sacrifice for the sake of peace.²

The "pillars" shewed a different spirit. They were spiritual men, who were ready to recognise the work of the Holy Ghost, even when on different lines from those which were more familiar to themselves. The Christian Pharisees still kept some of the narrowness of those who had opposed Our Lord Himself, and attributed His casting out of devils to Beelzebub. But "James, Cephas, and John"—when they "perceived the grace that was given unto me, gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship: that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision". The only condition made (in this preliminary discussion) was that the Gentile Christians should contribute (as they had already done) to the poorer Christians of Jerusalem,

¹ Prof. Ramsay, however, refers Gal. ii. to the earlier visit of Acts xi. 30, and xii. 25.

² "But neither Titus who was with me, being a Greek was compelled to be circumcised." The meaning depends on whether we regard "neither" or "compelled" as the emphatic word.

“ which very thing I ”, says St. Paul, “ was also zealous to do ” (Gal. ii. 9-10).

The actual proceedings of the Council so vividly described by St. Luke in Acts xv. show the sympathetic attitude of the leading Apostles, and the fact that it was their influence which carried the day for St. Paul. After a long preliminary discussion, St. Peter himself stood up, and pointed out that it was he himself who had first been guided by God to declare the Gospel to the Gentiles, and receive them into the Church (*i.e.* in the case of Cornelius [Acts x.]). Gentile and Jew had already received the same gift of the Holy Ghost, and had been placed on an equality. Not by circumcision or any Jewish ceremony, but by faith, had the hearts of the Gentile converts been purified. The conclusion St. Peter draws from this is remarkable, as shewing his fundamental agreement with what we are accustomed to regard as peculiarly Pauline teaching. “ Now therefore why tempt ye God, that ye should put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear ? But we believe that we shall be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in like manner as they ” (Acts xv. 10, 11).

To try to enforce the Jewish laws upon those who had been so palpably admitted to the Christian Covenant without them (as seen by the fact that Cornelius had received the Holy Ghost miraculously, even before his baptism) would be presumptuous, “ tempting God ”, as if men were wiser than He was. After all, it was not the Law that saved men, but only the free grace of Christ : in this respect Jew and Gentile convert were equal, and even the Jew, St. Peter hinted, might welcome an escape from the bondage of outward ceremonies, into the large liberty of grace. It was a bold saying, and it impressed the gathering, who now, instead of disputing, listened in silence to further statements from St. Paul and Barnabas as to the miracles and wonders by which God had borne witness to His acceptance of the Gentiles.

Finally, St. James, the near relative of the Lord Himself, and the official head of the Church of Jerusalem, summed up the debate with the tone of authority, and gave his own decision. This admission of the Gentiles into the household of faith, which had begun with St. Peter's own action

in regard to Cornelius, was strictly in accordance with the words of the prophets. He quoted the great Messianic prophecy of Amos (ix. 11-12), to the effect that after retribution had fallen to the full upon apostate Israel, the Davidic monarchy would be restored, and be a centre of true religion both for Jew and Gentile. The quotation agrees with the Septuagint rather than with the present Hebrew text, and brings out more clearly the fact that Gentile as well as Jew really belongs to Jehovah :

“ After these things I will return,
And I will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen ;
And I will build again the ruins thereof.
And I will set it up :
That the residue of men may seek after the Lord,
And all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called,
Saith the Lord ” (Acts xv. 16, 17).

To this St. James added an allusion to Is. xlv. 21, to the effect that God had known from the beginning, and made known by His prophets, all His works : thus implying (like St. Paul in Eph. iii. 9) that this calling of the Gentiles was part of God's eternal purpose, and in accordance with all that He had revealed. He concluded : “ Wherefore my judgement is, that we trouble not them which from among the Gentiles turn to God ; but that we write unto them, that they abstain from the pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from what is strangled, and from blood ” (*ib.* 19, 20). As for the Jewish Christians, he implies that they will be in the same position as before ; no dishonour will be done to Moses. The Law is read (and will still be read) in the synagogues every Sabbath in accordance with immemorial custom.

This decision of St. James was unanimously adopted by the Council ; but it is by no means clear what its exact meaning was. It is generally assumed to have been a law relating to *food*. The Mosaic rules respecting “ meats ” had done much to keep the Jews separate from the Gentiles, and unless some compromise in the matter could be arrived at, the Gentile Christians would find their friendly intercourse with their Jewish brethren barred at the outset. It is usually assumed, therefore, that the Gentile converts were being directed in this decree to abstain from certain practices with

Were the
Decrees of
Jerusalem
ceremonial
or moral ?

regard to food which would seriously wound the conscience of a Jew. They must refrain from eating any meat which had formed part of an idol-sacrifice, and also from any flesh which contained blood, "things strangled", as well as from the blood itself.

This, the traditional view of St. James's meaning, is open to serious objections. Why, in the first place, should a moral commandment (a fundamental Christian duty) to abstain from fornication be coupled with purely ceremonial directions? The only answer apparently to this, and not a very satisfactory answer, is to assume that the impurity referred to is that which so frequently took place in connection with the idolatrous rites and sacrifices of the heathen temples. Again, why should these commands be described as "necessary things" (v. 28), while the Gentiles were to be excused circumcision and the keeping of the Sabbath, rules equally sacred and distinctive for the Jew, and whose non-observance would be equally shocking to him? Why, once more, does St. Paul think it necessary to discuss, without any reference apparently to these decrees, the question of 'meats', in writing both to Corinthians, Romans, and Colossians? (see pp. 86, 128, 178).

Another explanation has been suggested, though it cannot be said to be proved. Some early authorities omit the clause "from things strangled", and so it has been thought that the remaining three precepts are not ceremonial at all, but *moral*, and forbid 'idolatry, bloodshed, and impurity', the three crimes which, it should be noticed, were in the early Church regarded as the most serious of all, and requiring public confession and absolution and penance before the sinner could be restored to the Christian body. If this explanation is right, the decision of St. James sets the Gentile converts free absolutely from the ceremonial law; if the former, they were only to be bound by such restrictions as would enable their Jewish brethren to join in social communion with them.¹

The question cannot be decided; but from any point of view

¹ It should be noted that the 'Bezan' text not only omits "things strangled", but adds "and what things ye would not be done to yourselves, do not to others"—the Christian rule of charity. See on the whole subject, Lake, *The Earlier Epistles of St. Paul*, pp. 48-60.

the decision was an acceptance in the main of St. Paul's contention, and a defeat for the extreme Pharisaic party. It was apparently accepted unanimously by the assembly, and embodied in a formal letter addressed "to the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch, and Syria, and Cilicia". The letter expressly repudiates the Pharisaic mission to Antioch, which had been the origin of the controversy; it speaks in terms of high eulogy of "our beloved Barnabas and Paul", as "men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ". To add still greater weight to the decision, delegates from the Jerusalem Church were chosen, Judas (surnamed Barsabas) and Silas, "chief men among the brethren", who also possessed the gift of prophecy. These were to accompany the Antiochene envoys, and personally to corroborate their report. Lastly, it should be noted that the decision is described as being itself Divinely inspired. "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us."¹

General
effect
of the
Decrees.

The deputation accomplished its task. The reading of the Jerusalem letter was the cause of great joy at Antioch; and this happy result was confirmed by the inspired exhortations of Judas and Silas. The latter, although formally 'dismissed' along with his colleague by the Christians of Antioch, when their work of reconciliation was ended, apparently stayed on at Antioch and attached himself closely to St. Paul.

It is remarkable that this decision of the Jerusalem Council should only twice afterwards be alluded to (Acts xvi. 4, xxi. 25). Indeed the Council seems to be the beginning rather than the end of a controversy, which was to outlast the lifetime of the principal actors. A principle of far-reaching importance had indeed been laid down; but it was far from being generally accepted or welcomed by the stricter Jewish Christians. Henceforth St. Paul and those who shared his ideals had to contend not only with the opposition of the unconverted Jews, but with something subtler and far more bitter, the narrowness and the prejudice and often the malice of the party of

Later con-
troversy.
St. Peter
and
St. Paul.

¹ This is a bold statement of the belief that the voice of the Church, deliberately expressed and accepted, is the voice of the Holy Spirit Himself. But this belief is entirely in accordance with the recorded teaching of Christ (St. Matt. xviii. 18; St. Luke xxii. 29-30; St. John xiv. 26, xv. 27, xvi. 13) and it underlies all the later conciliar action of the Church.

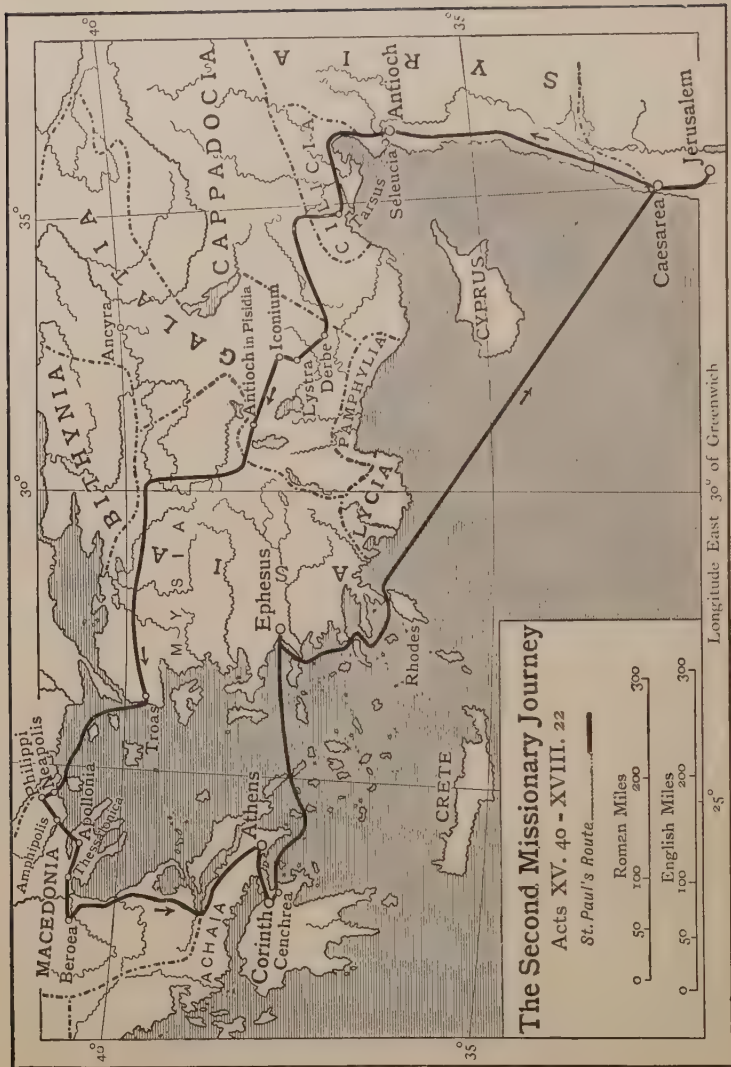
'Judaizers' within the Christian body : such as those whom he so vehemently attacked two or three years later in the Epistle to the Galatians.

Strangest and saddest of all must have been the incident disclosed in Gal. ii., the subsequent weakness of St. Peter himself, and its effect on the Jews of the Antiochene Church, including even St. Barnabas. On some visit of St. Peter to Antioch, "fearing them of the circumcision", *i.e.* some visitors from St. James at Jerusalem, he went back on his former liberal attitude and refused to eat with his brother Christians among the Gentiles.¹

After the Divine revelation made to him in connection with Cornelius (Acts x.) and his open confession before the Church : "Who was I, that I could withstand God" (xi. 17), it seems almost inconceivable, but for the force of inherited prejudice, that St. Peter could so far have gone against his word and his conscience. To the clear vision and fiery spirit of St. Paul, such conduct, whatever its motive, could not be palliated. To him it was only 'dissimulation' (lit. hypocrisy, a piece of insincere 'acting' or double-dealing). St. Peter in his eyes "stood condemned". "I resisted him to the face." In open assembly he charged St. Peter with his inconsistency with "the truth of the Gospel". "If thou, being a Jew, livest as do the Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, how compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?"

That such a scene as this did not lead to a real schism in the Church redounds greatly to the credit of St. Peter himself. He apparently accepted the rebuke of his brother, and as far as Antioch went, the controversy seem to have been healed. St. Peter had shewn himself a glorious example of his own precepts. "All of you gird yourselves with humility to serve one another" (1 St. Peter, v. 5).

¹ It has been assumed above that this visit of St. Peter was after the Council. This, however, is by no means certain. The "certain who came from James" may have been the troublers of conscience of Acts xv. 1, whose visit had given rise to the Council. Perhaps the place to which St. Peter had fled after his imprisonment was Antioch (Acts xii.), and it was this visit to which the incident should be referred.



CHAPTER VI

THE SECOND JOURNEY : PHILIPPI AND THESSALONICA

Like clouds are they borne to do Thy great will,
And swift as the winds about the world go :
All full of the Godhead, while earth lieth still,
They thunder, they lighten, the waters o'erflow.

AFTER the Council of Jerusalem, some little time, probably several months, was spent by St. Paul at Antioch, in company with Barnabas and many other Christian teachers, "teaching and preaching the word of the Lord"; both building up the existing Church and trying to extend its influence among its heathen neighbours. But St. Paul could not but remember with affection, and perhaps with some fear, those little Christian communities, with their new-made "elders", which he had established in Southern Galatia. He proposed to St. Barnabas another visit to them. But the two pioneers were not again to work together. Barnabas wished to take with them once more his relative, John Mark. St. Paul refused: he could not condone that desertion of the missionary work, in Pamphylia, whatever its reason (p. 25). The difference of opinion became "a sharp contention", and this led to a separation. Barnabas took his relative on another missionary errand, to his own original home at Cyprus, which had been visited in the first journey. With the exception of an allusion in 1 Cor. ix. 6, Barnabas now disappears from the New Testament. An early Christian tradition ascribes to him the authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews.¹

¹ The so-called Epistle of Barnabas, a violent attack on Judaism, is no doubt spurious, and probably of the second century.

John Mark was afterwards forgiven, and is affectionately alluded to in St. Paul's later writings (pp. 180, 195).

St. Paul selected as his companion Silas, or Silvanus, the Jerusalem envoy and 'prophet', like himself a Roman citizen. Silas and Timothy. Commended by the Antiochene brethren (no doubt in some formal service of "dismissal") to "the grace of the Lord", the two, perhaps accompanied by others, began to go over again the well-known ground of the first journey, but in reverse order, strengthening and encouraging the infant Churches. Crossing the Taurus range, they approached the cities where the first missionary journey had ended, Derbe and Lystra. At the latter place was a young convert of high promise and repute, Timotheus, whose mother Eunice was a pious Jewess who had embraced the Gospel, but whose father was a Greek. He seemed a suitable coadjutor in the missionary task: indeed, prophecy had marked him out as a good soldier of Christ. He was apparently ordained by St. Paul by the laying on of hands (see p. 187); but first he received circumcision—a strange and retrograde step, it might seem; though it was evidently done to avoid giving unnecessary offence to the Jews, which might have been caused had the Gospel been laid before them by one who was obviously outside the pale of ancient Israel.

A successful progress was made in a north-westerly direction through Southern Galatia¹ and Phrygia, strengthening the faith of The Spirit's existing Churches, and adding daily new converts. The guidance. decrees of the Council of Jerusalem were delivered them to keep (—) a testimony to the Gentile Christians of their liberty in Christ. The district of Antioch in Pisidia would probably be the last stage in this work of going over the old ground of the first journey. Where next was the Gospel to be preached? The natural course, and probably the course which the travellers had in their mind, was to enter the province of 'Asia', and work westward towards the great Greek city of Ephesus on the coast. But some mysterious guidance of the Holy Spirit forbade it. Turning northward, they seem to have next contemplated a mission in the province of Bithynia. Again "the Spirit of Jesus" suffered

¹ Those who identify the Galatians of the Epistle with the Gallic Christians of Northern Galatia assume that it was on this occasion that these latter were evangelised, though this would involve a long journey northward—and leaves totally unexplained the silence of St. Luke on the subject.

them not. Next they skirted Mysia (the ancient name of the N.-W. part of the province of 'Asia'), and finally arrived at the coast of the Aegæan at Troas, an important city and port, and a Roman colony. Was it here where their tongues would once more be unloosed to proclaim the Gospel?

A supernatural call, no longer a mere negative prohibition, decided it. Greater prospects were opening before them. "And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There was a man of Macedonia standing, beseeching him, and saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. And when he had seen the vision, straightway we sought to go forth into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us for to preach the gospel into them" (Acts xvi. 9, 10).

The Call
to Mace-
donia.

Here for the first time the historian speaks in his own person 'we'. Either St. Luke here first joined the band of missionaries or else he regards this turning-point not only as so great in itself, but of such personal interest that he here disclosed the fact of his own presence. It was indeed a great moment. To cross over into Macedonia meant to carry the Gospel definitely into Europe. And, as events proved, it was the entrance of St. Paul into the most remarkable and original part of his work. We approach the period both of the foundation of the Church in the greatest Greek centres round the Aegæan, and of St. Paul's chief epistles.¹

Without hesitation or delay the Apostles embarked on some ship which was about to cross the head of the Aegæan. Favourable winds took them across (125 miles) in two days, the night being spent at anchorage at the island of Samothrace. Landing at Neapolis, they seem to have pressed on at once to Philippi, ten miles inland. This city, founded by Philip of Macedon, was of importance, not so much for commerce as for its strategical position and its close connection with Rome and Roman history. It was here that the memorable and decisive battle had been fought between the republican army of Brutus

Philippi.

¹ It is impossible to decide *how* these directions of the Holy Spirit came to the travellers. Was it some unknown and mysterious gift, like the daemon of Socrates, which acted as an effective check on any action disapproved by God? Or was it the prophetic insight of Silas or others of the company? Or may it have been some combination of unrecorded circumstances which, seeming natural at first, were seen afterwards to have been a distinct leading of the Holy Spirit? This last possibility would of course bring the matter more within the range of ordinary Christian experience of Divine guidance.

and Cassius and the army of Antony and Octavian in 42 B.C. Philippi, in consequence, had been made a Roman "colony", or settlement of Roman citizens and soldiers, with the highest civic rights. And it commanded the great coast communication between the east and west of the Empire. The events described shew its citizens to have been particularly proud of their connection with Rome, and inscriptions prove that its official language was Latin. There was evidently no synagogue, and therefore no Jewish settlement. At Philippi St. Paul for the first time definitely came into an almost purely Roman atmosphere. St. Luke describes the city as being "of Macedonia, the first of the district, a Roman colony"—the only occasion where he gives this sort of description of the places visited. It has been suggested that the evident interest the writer takes in Philippi points to it being his own native place. In any case St. Luke seems to have lived here for some five years after the first entrance, and it was to the Church founded here that St. Paul afterwards wrote the most affectionate and eulogistic of his Epistles (p. 163).

Though there were apparently no Jews in Philippi, inquiry seems to have disclosed the fact that there were some women of the class of 'God-fearers', *i.e.* Gentiles who were attracted by Judaism, who met on the Sabbath for prayer. As usual, their place of meeting was by the river-side, in a building or enclosure, called a *proseucha* (place of prayer). Here the Apostles bent their way on the Sabbath, and began to teach Christ to the worshippers. Among them was a Greek woman, evidently of some wealth and position—Lydia, from Thyatira, "a seller of purple", *i.e.* of the purple goods dyed at that place, which would find a ready market in the Roman world. The power of the Gospel won Lydia to the faith: "the Lord opened her heart": she was baptized with the members of her household; her house became the centre of the new-born Philippian Church; and the Apostles, at her courteous entreaty, took up their lodging there.

But this happy and peaceful beginning of the Church of Macedonia was soon to be marred by a collision with the heathen power. This arose from an incident like that at Paphos (p. 23), where the preachers of Christ were confronted with the mysterious system of magic and imposture which loomed so large in heathen religions. A poor mad slave-girl, who was sup-

Exorcism.

posed to be possessed of powers of clairvoyance¹ and by these was a source of gain to her masters, was attracted by the Apostles. She followed them as often as they went to and from the place of prayer, shouting out: "These men are servants of the Most High God, which proclaim unto you the way of salvation". This may have been meant in derision, but more likely it is to be compared with those confessions of Christ made by evil spirits in the Gospel which the Lord Himself rebuked.

After many days of this molestation, St. Paul turned to the girl as she followed, and exorcised the demon: "I charge thee, in the name of Jesus Christ, to come out of her". The girl was at once delivered from her possession, but she lost her supernatural powers, and could no longer be a source of profit to her owners.

The latter seized upon the Apostles Paul and Silas, and dragged them into the agora, where the magistrates were sitting, the two 'strategi', or 'duumviri', the representatives of Roman authority. The charge brought against the Apostles was characteristic: "These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city, and set forth customs which it is not lawful for us to receive, or to observe, being Romans" (Acts xvi. 20, 21). The result does not reflect favourably upon Philippian methods of administering justice. Apparently no hearing was given to the accused. The magistrates allowed themselves to be the tools of mob violence. Philippian pride revolted against being taught a new religion by vagabond Jews. The Apostles were stripped, and furiously beaten with the rods of the lictors, and then consigned to the care of the keeper of the public prison, with a charge to "keep them safely" as dangerous persons. They were thrown into the inner dungeon, and, as if they had not suffered enough, were fastened by their feet in the stocks.

The next scene, one of the most vivid in Scripture, and most remarkable in its effect, must be described in St. Luke's own words:

"But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns unto God, and the prisoners were listening to them; and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison-house were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened; and every one's bands

The
Apostles
beaten
and im-
prisoned.

The jailor
converted.

¹ She is described as having 'a spirit, a python', *i.e.* probably she was a ventriloquist.

were loosed. And the jailor being roused out of sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, drew his sword, and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm : for we are all here. And he called for lights, and sprang in, and, trembling for fear, fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved ? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house. And they spake the word of the Lord unto him, with all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes ; and was baptized, he and all his, immediately. And he brought them up into his house, and set meat before them, and rejoiced greatly, with all his house, having believed in God " (Acts xvi. 25-34).

There is every evidence here of the memories of one of the actual eye-witnesses of the scene, both in the graphic description of the earthquake and of the conduct of the jailor. The shock unloosened the bars by which the doors were secured ; and also the staples in the walls of the dungeon to which the prisoners were chained. The jailor, knowing that he was responsible for his prisoners with his own life, and assuming that the opportunity of escape had been seized by them all, was on the point of suicide, the natural and honourable ending, in the Roman opinion of his day, of an impossible situation. His terror was apparently increased by the supernatural calm of his prisoners. His cry, " What must I do to be saved ? " need not be interpreted merely of his fear of punishment : he felt he was in the presence of powers beyond his knowledge. No doubt he knew what was the occasion of Paul and Silas being brought before the magistrates. Evidently they had powers more than human. Their ' most high God ' was angry, and he could only be saved by their intercession.

His cry for salvation was sincere, though uninstructed, and ' the name which is above every name ' was at once revealed to him : " Believe on the Lord Jesus ". This by itself would indeed have conveyed little to him ; it was followed immediately by an instruction, " they spake the word of the Lord unto him ". He and all his family forthwith received baptism ; and his two prisoners were treated as honoured guests.

The morning seems to have brought 'second thoughts' to the unjust magistrates of Philippi. No doubt the earthquake had frightened them. They sent their lictors to the prison with the curt order "let those men go". But St. Paul rightly judged that such persons ought to be taught a lesson. The day before, mob-violence had apparently prevented any appeal to Roman citizenship. But this right must not be ignored. There is a characteristic ring about the Apostle's indignant reply to the lictors' message :

Humilia-
tion of the
Philippian
magis-
trates.

"They have beaten us publicly, uncondemned, men that are Romans, and have cast us into prison ; and do they now cast us out privily ? nay, verily ; but let them come themselves and bring us out" (Acts xvi. 37).

This was touching the Philippians on their most susceptible side. The tables were indeed turned. These men, who had been wounded and imprisoned for a supposed insult to the majesty of Roman citizens, were citizens themselves ! And the arm of the Emperor might easily and swiftly reach as far as Philippi to punish such a breach of Roman law. The duumvirs humbly came to the prison, escorted the two prisoners forth, and "asked" them to leave the city. After a meeting with the Christian brotherhood at the house of Lydia, Paul and Silas proceeded on their journey, apparently leaving Luke behind them to preside over and build up the new-formed Church.

They proceeded along the Egnatian way, through the mountainous and difficult country of Macedonia towards Thessalonica, the capital. Pauses were apparently made at Amphipolis and Apollonia, but nothing is recorded of preaching at these places.

Thessalonica (Saloniki), some ninety miles from Philippi, was then, as now, an important and popular city and seaport, a centre of commerce. It had been allowed by the Romans to retain its original democratic constitution—government by a *demos*, or citizen assembly, under seven magistrates called 'politarchs'. Here was a synagogue, and St. Paul, faithful to his custom, began his preaching by an appeal to his own nation. On three Sabbath days he expounded the Scriptures, dwelling on two main theses : (1) That the Messiah was, in accordance with prophecy, to suffer death and rise again from the dead ; and (2) that Jesus of Nazareth was this Messiah. His preaching

Thessa-
lonica.

won a certain number of the Jews, and a much larger number of the Greek adherents of the synagogue (the 'God-fearers'), including many of the chief ladies of the city. The centre of this Church of the Gentiles was the house of one Jason; and probably some little time was spent here. But the majority of the Jews were unconvinced, and, inflamed with anger that the former supporters of the synagogue were forming a new congregation, appealed to the passions of the mob, never a difficult matter in such a place as Thessalonica. They "took unto them certain vile fellows of the rabble". That there were bad and disorderly characters is clear, but it is not quite certain whether the word translated "rabble" refers to the idle loafers of the market-place, or to those who habitually spent their time in stirring up popular discontent (Lake translates "agitators"). They succeeded in "setting the city on an uproar," and an attack was made on the house of Jason, with the intention of seizing the Apostles and dragging them before the assembly as they had been taken before the duumvirs in Roman Philippi.

But the Apostles had been forewarned of trouble and could not be found. Jason and some of his fellow-Christians were apprehended instead and brought before the politarchs with the characteristic outcry: "These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also; whom Jason hath received: and these all act contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus" (Acts xvii. 6, 7).

The forms of law were observed, and as the real criminals were not to be found, Jason and his companions were released on bail, as a security either for their own reappearance, if required, or for the dismissal of the Apostles from the city.

It was thought wisest by the Christian converts that the two chief marks for Jewish hostility should be made safe. So under cover of night Paul and Silas were conveyed out of the city, and despatched on the way to Beroea, an important and beautiful town some forty miles away.

So St. Paul left Thessalonica, to which he afterwards addressed his two earliest epistles (pp. 60, etc.). His relations with his converts and his memories of them were of the most affectionate nature. He regarded his work among the Gentiles here as in the highest sense successful: "Our Gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in

The Thes-
salonian
Church.

the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance ; even as ye know what manner of men we shewed ourselves toward you for your sake. And ye became imitators of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost ; so that ye became an ensample to all that believe in Macedonia and in Achaia. For from you hath sounded forth the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place your faith to God-ward is gone forth ; so that we need not to speak anything. For they themselves report concerning us what manner of entering in we had unto you ; and how ye turned unto God from idols, to serve a living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivereth us from the wrath to come ” (1 Thess. i. 5-10). His own attitude towards them during his stay is described in the tenderest imagery. “ We were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children.” “ Ye were become very dear unto us.” “ We dealt with each one of you as a father with his own children.” “ Ye are our glory and our joy ” (1 Thess. ii.).

At Beroea the Apostles' reception by the Jews of the synagogue was a striking contrast to the conduct of the Thessalonian Jews. St. Luke is careful to point out that they were of a better class, “ more noble than those in Thessalonica ”. Beroea. Their nobility shewed itself in their open, unprejudiced attitude. They “ examined the scriptures daily ”, to see whether the Gospel message could be verified by prophecy. A large number were converted, including also many Greeks, both men and women of high rank.

But here again Jewish hostility began a campaign. An embassy came from the Jews of Thessalonica “ stirring up and troubling the multitudes ”. Again fearing popular violence, the converts decided to convey St. Paul away. He was conducted by some of them towards the coast ; but here apparently the plan was changed, and he was escorted inland again on the road towards Athens, without preaching in Achaia. Silas and Timothy still remained at Beroea ; but on his arrival at Athens St. Paul sent an urgent message by his returning escort that these two fellow-workers should rejoin him as soon as possible.

CHAPTER VII

ATHENS AND CORINTH : THE THESSALONIAN EPISTLES

And now another Canaan yields
To Thine all-conquering ark :
Fly from the old poetic fields,
Ye Paynim shadows dark !
Immortal Greece, dear land of glorious lays,
Lo ! here the " unknown God " of thy unconscious praise !

J. KEBLE.

AT St. Paul's first entry into Athens his thoughts seem to have been more with the converts he had been compelled to leave in Thessalonica than with the pageant of heathen wisdom and religion which now confronted him. Timothy joined him very shortly, but his report of the Thessalonians and the persecutions they were enduring filled the Apostle with grave anxiety. He thought it " good " again " to be left at Athens alone ", and to send back Timothy to " establish and comfort " his suffering children (1 Thess. iii.).

He now turned his attention directly to the wonderful city of his new sojourn. Athens was still the ' Oxford ' of the ancient world. The spell which her history, her thinkers, and her artists had cast upon the thoughts of mankind was still strong, though other universities, especially Alexandria, were doing more solid work for the advancement of learning. Athens was still the home of the philosophical schools, whose teaching had practically taken the place of religion in the world of thought. But she was living largely on her past reputation ; curiosity, criticism, intellectual frivolity were the chief features of her university life. The historian of the Acts was most struck by the Athenians straining after that spurious originality (not unknown in modern times), which

is always anxious to be ' up-to-date ' and know the latest thing ; " all the Athenians and the strangers sojourning there " (university students) " spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear, some new thing " (Acts xvii. 21).

But what impressed St. Paul most deeply and immediately at Athens was its idolatry. It was " full of idols ". To the Jew, as well as the Christian, this was abhorrent. Indeed Encounter with the Philo-sophers. Athens went beyond other heathen cities in the multitude of temples and the punctiliousness and pomp with which the different worships were performed. St. Paul's " spirit was provoked within him ". He could not keep silence. Not only did he follow his usual practice of reasoning in synagogue with Jew and Gentile worshipper ; he also took advantage of Athenian liberty of discussion in the Agora. Every day he argued with those who met with him. Such a new teacher could not escape the notice of the philosophic schools. Epicureans and Stoics encountered him and discussed his message, some with contempt : " What would this babbler say ? "—what does he mean, this " picker-up of learning's crumbs " ? while others, misled by his emphasis on two words, ' Jesus ' and ' anastasis ' (' resurrection '), imagined him to be setting forth two new foreign gods. These discussions came to a head in a request from the philosophers to have his teaching definitely stated. This request, though politely worded—" may we know ? "—seems to have been accompanied by some sort of a formal presentation of the Apostle, as a teacher of strange or foreign religion, before the supreme court of the Areopagus. The place of hearing was probably not the ancient Areopagus, or Mars' Hill, but the Stoa Basilica (from which the Stoics derived their name), where the Archon Basileus held his court.

It was a unique moment in the history of the Gospel. The representatives of the world's highest efforts and The Speech to the Council of Areopagus. achievements in wisdom and philosophy, in all that enriches man's natural life and elevates his thought, are assembled to hear. St. Paul is to deliver his great message to that gifted nation, of whom it has well been said :

On all this world of men inherits
Their seal is set.

With St. Paul there could be no question of either flattery

or compromise. He had to proclaim the failure of man's wisdom to find out God, and the answer that God Himself had given in Christ. But his speech is marked not only by courtesy and tact, but by a width of view which was worthy of a philosopher. At Athens, as at Lystra, he makes no allusion to the Old Testament revelation. He rather bases his setting forth of the Gospel on 'natural religion'.

Commencing by speaking of the Athenians as "much inclined to religion",¹ he made the text of his discourse an inscription which he had noticed on one of the wayside altars, "To an Unknown God". No doubt this dedication referred to some event which had taken place on the spot, regarded as supernatural, but which could not be assigned to any named divinity. But to St. Paul it suggested greater thoughts: "Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you" (A.V.). His philosophic audience would not find his account of God's being and nature altogether unfamiliar. He spoke to them of one God, who was creator and ruler and lover of mankind, source and upholder of all life, immanent in all things and transcending all limitations, yet desiring to be known of men. "The God that made the world and all things therein, he, being Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is he served by men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he himself giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; and he made of one every nation of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed seasons, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek God, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he is not far from each one of us: for in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain even of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring" (Acts xvii. 24-28). All this was in harmony with the best theology of the Greeks, and it was clenched, gracefully enough, with the quotation from Aratus, the Stoic poet, St. Paul's own fellow-citizen.

But the deduction was not so pleasing; idolatry is declared

¹ "Too superstitious" (A.V.) or "somewhat superstitious" (R.V.) does not seem to strike the right note. The word is ambiguous, but it might be interpreted almost as a compliment to his audience. There is a touch of humour in it. "Ye are in all things much inclined to revere the supernatural."

to be unworthy of such a conception of God. " Being then the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and device of man " (*ib.* 29).

Truths still more unpalatable to the Athenian follow. The past time has been one of 'ignorance'; God has been forbearing enough to overlook it, but now He requires *repentance* from all men everywhere. A day of judgment is appointed for the world. The judge will himself be *man*, and to this Man God has given overwhelming credentials: " He hath raised Him from the dead ". True philosophy and natural religion thus lead on to the central paradox of the Gospel, the Resurrection of Christ, and the call to the world to repent. Such an unexpected conclusion was too much for most of his hearers. " Some mocked ", others said, " We will hear thee concerning this yet again ". Judging by its immediate results, the great sermon met with small success. St. Paul left Athens shortly, having made few converts: two are mentioned by name—Dionysius the Areopagite, *i.e.* one of the judges of the supreme court (said by tradition to have become afterwards bishop of Athens), and a lady called Damaris.

St. Paul's next tarrying-place was Corinth, the capital of Achaia, and the most important seaport on the Mediterranean. Here he was to remain for a year and a half, and to found one of the most remarkable churches of the first century. He made the acquaintance at once of a Jew of Pontus, Aquila, who with his wife Priscilla had already apparently embraced the faith of Christ. They had only lately come from Rome, whence the Emperor Claudius had just banished the Jews.¹ St. Paul took up his residence with these two, who were both evidently of striking personality and influence, and play a considerable part in the Apostle's later career. Like all Jews they practised a trade. Theirs was the same as St. Paul's, the Cilician craft of tent-making; and they worked together; for here as elsewhere the Apostle was anxious to prove his sincerity by earning his own

Repentance and Faith offered to the Athenians.

Corinth.

¹ This took place about A.D. 49, and is stated by Suetonius to have been caused by the riotous behaviour of the Jews in Rome at the instigation of " Chrestus ". Probably the Jews had quarrelled with the Christians.

living and making no gain out of his converts. According to his custom St. Paul began his ministry by reasoning in the synagogue every Sabbath, appealing both to Jews and to the God-fearing Greeks. Apparently these efforts were not at first very powerful. The Apostle was in ill-health, isolated from his fellow-labourers, and perhaps dispirited by his failure at Athens. He thus describes in writing later to the Christians of Corinth the beginning of his work among them: "I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling" (1 Cor. ii. 3). An access of spiritual power came upon him at the return of Silas and Timothy from Thessalonica. He was "pressed" or "constrained" "by the word", and abandoning the effort to "persuade" he boldly flung out the great challenge to the Jews, "the Messiah" whom you expect "is Jesus". And when the Jews met him with resistance and cursings at the name of the Crucified, with a dramatic gesture, shaking out his raiment he, as it were, declared them of their own act to be apostates. "Your blood be upon your own heads: I am clean; from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles."

He now found his centre for preaching Christ in the house of a convert, Titus Justus, which adjoined the synagogue. Here with his first converts, Stephanas, Gaius, and Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, he formed the nucleus of the Corinthian Church. It grew rapidly, and there were many baptisms. A vision of Christ Himself confirmed the new work: "And the Lord said unto Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to harm thee: for I have much people in this city" (Acts xviii. 9, 10).

Silas and Timotheus had brought what was on the whole encouraging news from the Thessalonian converts, "good tidings of your faith and love" (1 Thess. iii. 6); and St. Paul must have written at once the *First Epistle* to that Church, followed probably very quickly by the second. The Thessalonian Christians had been suffering persecution from their fellow-citizens, instigated doubtless by the Jews, but they were standing fast. And this good news drew from their Apostle the warmest and most affectionate messages. The letter begins joyfully, "We give thanks to God always for you all." "What", he asks later on, "is our hope and

Founda-
tion of the
Corinthian
Church.
Epistle to
the Thes-
salonians.

joy, or crown of rejoicing ? Are not even ye before our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming ? For ye are our glory and our joy " (ii. 19, 20). Or again : " Therefore for this cause, brethren, we were comforted over you in all our distress and affliction through your faith : for now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord. For what thanksgiving can we render again unto God for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before our God ; night and day praying exceedingly that we may see your face, and may perfect that which is lacking in your faith ? " (iii. 7-10). With their steadfastness and their mutual love St. Paul has no fault to find. He recognises in these things the certain proof of Divine grace and teaching. But there were some matters in Timothy's report that evidently called for warning and instruction.

The first and obvious peril of all the Gentile converts was moral laxity. They had not been trained under the discipline of the Law of Moses ; but inherited a low standard of purity from generations of heathenism. With comparatively little instruction they had now been initiated into a religion of high ideals, which laid down principles rather than rules, which inculcated liberty, and left much to the individual conscience. St. Paul repeats to the Thessalonians a warning he had already given them—Holiness is to be their ideal—God has called them to this and not to uncleanness. Gentile lusts and passions must be put away. " He that rejecteth, rejecteth not man but God, who giveth his Holy Spirit unto you " (iv. 2-8).

The
Gentile
need of
holiness.

Another evident danger was idleness and restlessness. It is not clear whether this was due to some too vivid expectation of the immediate *Parousia* or ' Coming ' of Christ, or to the tendency of the poorer members of the Church to try to live on the charity of the richer. But in both epistles St. Paul condemns it in striking words : " Study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your hands, even as we charged you ; that ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and may have need of nothing " (1 Thess. iv. 11, 12). " For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, If any will not work, neither let him eat. For we hear of some that walk among you disorderly, that work not at all, but are busybodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ,

Industry
inculcated.

that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread " (2 Thess. iii. 10-12).

The certainty and the suddenness of the Advent of Christ are insisted upon, but that great day is to be prepared for by soberness, watchfulness, and the diligent practice of the homely Christian virtues. "Ye yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. When they are saying, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child ; and they shall in no wise escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief : for ye are all sons of light, and sons of the day : we are not of the night, nor of darkness ; so then let us not sleep, as do the rest, but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night ; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, since we are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love ; and for a helmet the hope of salvation " (1 Thess. v. 2-8).

This expectation of the nearness of Christ's *Parousia* (which seems to have been prominent in St. Paul's early teaching) had led to one curious misunderstanding. The Thessalonians seem to have thought that the Messianic kingdom on earth would be established when Christ appeared, and that those Christians who died before that event would be in some inferior position compared with those who survived to see it. Such an idea, such sorrow on behalf of the dead, is in St. Paul's mind heathenish ; it is like the attitude of those "who have no hope". The triumph of Christ and the gathering of His saints to Him will be untrammelled by space and time. "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we that are alive, that are left unto the coming of the Lord, shall in no wise precede them that are fallen asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God : and the dead in Christ shall rise first : then we that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air : and so shall we ever be with the Lord " (1 Thess. iv. 15-17).

The Epistle ends with an earnest exhortation to a right attitude towards the elders who had been appointed by the Apostles to rule

the Church. "But we beseech you, brethren, to know them that labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them exceeding highly in love for their work's sake" (v. 12, 13). Concluding exhortations.

This is followed by a series of brief encouragements to mutual endeavour for the common good :

"And we exhort you, brethren, admonish the disorderly, encourage the fainthearted, support the weak, be longsuffering toward all. See that none render unto any one evil for evil; but always follow after that which is good, one toward another, and toward all" (*ib.* 14, 15).

And to spiritual activity :

"Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus to you-ward. Quench not the Spirit;¹ despise not prophesyings; prove all things; hold fast that which is good; abstain from every form of evil" (*ib.* 16-22).

Finally all that a Christian should aim at and hope for is beautifully summed up in the concluding prayer :

"And the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved entire, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who will also do it" (*ib.* 23-24).

The *Second Epistle* must have followed very shortly. Its authenticity has been disputed owing to the difficulty of explaining its relationship to the first, or the necessity of writing it. But it is thoroughly Pauline in language and thought. Its conclusion, iii. 17-18, makes a special claim to be genuine. The Apostle usually dictated his letters, but in this case he has finished the letter, he says, with his own hand, writing his characteristic "salutation", "which is the token in every epistle"—"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all". The problem of 2 Thessalonians.

It has been suggested that 2 Thess. was intended primarily for the Jewish members of the Church; 1 Thess. being quite evidently addressed to those who had been converted from

¹ Referring to the well-known prophetic gifts (described more fully in 1 Cor. xii.-xiv.) of the Apostolic Church. These might be quenched by sloth or half-heartedness, or disregarded by pride.

heathenism. Possibly there was some division between the two sections, which accounts for the strong command in 1 Thess. v. 27 that that epistle should be read to *all* the brethren. At any rate there is no allusion in 2 Thess. either to Jewish persecutors or to heathen antecedents. As to the exact purpose of the letter, it seems clear that St. Paul had been informed of some misunderstanding as to his teaching of the Coming of Christ. This may have arisen either from forged letters in his name or by some misreading of 1 Thess. At any rate, those who are addressed were in danger of thinking that the "Day of the Lord" was not in the future but had already begun: just as the Corinthians a little later were being persuaded by some teachers that the Resurrection had already taken place.

"Now we beseech you, brethren, touching the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto him; to the end that ye be not quickly shaken from your mind, nor yet be troubled, either by spirit, or by word, or by epistle as from us, as that the day of the Lord is now present" (2 Thess. ii. 1, 2).

To correct this erroneous idea, the Apostle proceeds in mysterious language, the full meaning of which is still doubtful, to assure his readers that before the great Day of the Lord can come, two things will have to happen: (1) There will be the revelation of Antichrist, accompanied by a great "falling away" from faith. This opponent of Christ is described as 'the man of sin', and 'the son of perdition', "he that opposeth and exalteth himself against all that is called God or that is worshipped; so that he sitteth in the temple of God, setting himself forth as God" (*ib.* 4). (2) Some power which at present (as was well known to the Church) was restraining the coming of Antichrist would have to be removed. This power is generally thought to have been in St. Paul's thought identical with the Roman Empire, which would account for the very guarded language in which he speaks of it being taken away. Probably he had in his mind the prophecy of "the fourth Kingdom" (Dan. vii. 23), which was to disappear before the kingdom of the saints. Daniel speaks also of an adversary who will rise out of the ruins of the fourth Kingdom, whom he calls "the little horn", and "a King of fierce countenance (viii.), who will persecute the saints, and stand up against the Prince of princes". St. Paul probably understood

this, which was first fulfilled in Antiochus Epiphanes, the persecutor of the faithful Jews in the second century B.C., to have a further reference to the coming of Antichrist who would appear at the end of the Roman Empire, and be destroyed by the Second Coming of Christ. Hence his words :

“ And then shall be revealed the lawless one, whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the breath of his mouth, and bring to nought by the manifestation of his coming ; *even* he, whose coming is according to the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceit of unrighteousness for them that are perishing ; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved ” (*ib.* 8-10).

The rest of 2 Thess. presents close parallels to the first Epistle, except that there is no allusion to the characteristic moral danger of converts from heathenism. He insists again on the necessity of work, quietness, and mutual encouragement. And he lays special stress on the duty of obedience to the apostolic authority and teaching : “ hold the traditions which ye were taught ”— “ withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly and not after the tradition which they received of us ”— “ if any man obeyeth not our word of this Epistle, note that man that ye have no company with him ”. The Epistle ends with the beautiful blessing : “ Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace always in all ways ”.

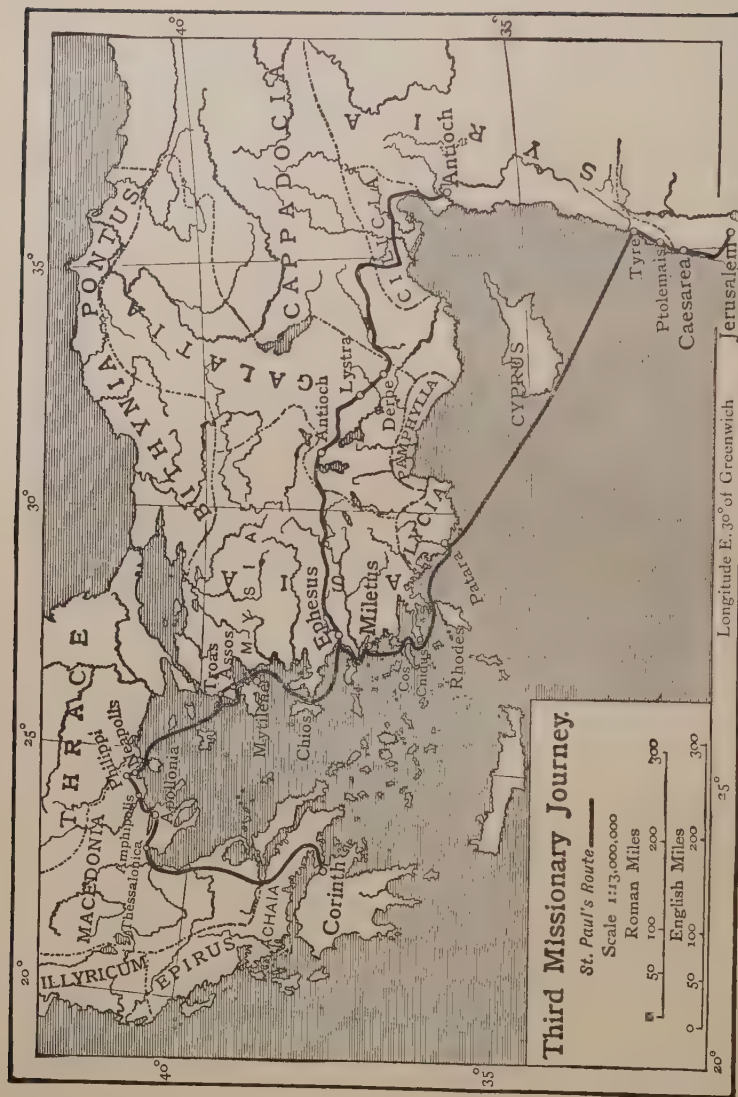
The rapid growth and enthusiasm of the Corinthian Church, with its new headquarters so close to the synagogue, roused the Jews to fury. They endeavoured by a display of mob violence to obtain the conviction of St. Paul from the Roman proconsul. Making a sudden ‘insurrection’ they seized the Apostle and dragged him before the tribunal on the charge, “ This man persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law ”. But Gallio, the proconsul, was made of different stuff from Pontius Pilate. He was a man of high birth and character, brother of the philosopher Seneca, and uncle of the poet Lucan. He is called by a contemporary “ the sweet Gallio ” : but his sweetness veiled a determined disposition. Without waiting to hear Paul’s defence, he somewhat contemptuously dismissed the charge and commanded his lictors to clear the court ; saying : “ If indeed it

St. Paul
before
Gallio.

were a matter of wrong or of wicked villany, O ye Jews, reason would that I should bear with you : but if they are questions about words and names and your own law, look to it yourselves ; I am not minded to be a judge of these matters ” (xviii. 14, 15). A counter demonstration of the populace against the Jews followed immediately. Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, was seized and beaten in the court-house. “ And Gallio cared for none of these things.”

St. Paul stayed some time longer at Corinth, and then started on a visit to Jerusalem. There was a religious reason for this, which shews that he carefully observed ceremonies of the Jewish religion which were not inconsistent with the Gospel. We read that he had ‘ shorn his head ’ in Cenchrea, the port of Corinth, in completion of a vow. What this vow was is not recorded ; but the Jewish ritual concerning vows required that the hair should be allowed to grow while the period of the vow lasted (Num. vi. 5). When the hair was cut it was burned solemnly in the fire of the altar at Jerusalem (*ib.* 18). If the “ Nazirite ” was away from Jerusalem he kept the hair until such time as he was able to fulfil the ceremony. Sailing from Cenchrea St. Paul, accompanied by Aquila and Priscilla, started on his journey. Ephesus, the greatest city in Asia, destined shortly to be one of St. Paul’s chief centres, was the first port of call. Here Aquila and Priscilla remained. St. Paul entered the synagogue, and “ reasoned with the Jews ”. He could not stay long, though requested to do so, as the ship was waiting. But he promised to return, if God willed it. Landing again at Caesarea he went up to Jerusalem, fulfilled his vow, and “ saluted the Church ”. He then made his way to Antioch and stayed some time there : apparently his last visit.

Another
visit to
Jerusalem.



CHAPTER VIII

THE THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY : EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS

From blinded zeal by faction led ;
From giddy change by fancy bred ;
From poisonous error's serpent head
Good Lord, preserve us free.

ST. PAUL'S next movement is briefly described in Acts xviii. 23 as a progress "through the region of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples". Evidently ^{Third visit} he was going over old ground : and we may assume ^{to Galatia.} that the district referred to is the scene of his first missionary work, with its towns of Iconium, Lystra, Derbe, and Pisidian Antioch (see above, Chap. IV). Many suppose that this visit was for the purpose of following up and clenching the teaching and rebuke given in the Epistle to the Galatians, which, it is assumed, was written from Antioch. Other authorities place the Galatian trouble and the epistle which dealt with it at a later date, more about the time when 2 Corinthians and Romans were written. This question cannot be decided : but it will be convenient here to state what was the occasion and the subject of the famous Galatian letter. It was a crisis intimately bound up with the Catholic view of the Gospel and St. Paul's dearest ideals.

The decisions of the Jerusalem Council with regard to the Gentile converts (Acts xv.—some two or three years before this time) had not been loyally accepted by some of St. Paul's opponents. They clung obstinately to their ^{Judaizing} conception of Christianity as nothing but a wider ^{movement} ^{in Galatia.} Judaism. Gentile converts, they still held, must submit to

circumcision and accept the Mosaic Law in all its details. They spared neither intrigue nor vilification of St. Paul in their efforts to enforce this. Some of their emissaries visited the newly founded Churches of Galatia, and succeeded in shaking the simple-minded and impressionable converts. St. Paul was represented as a teacher without apostolic authority, and preaching an imperfect gospel. It is easy to understand how the Galatians fell victims to this Judaizing mission. Doubtless St. Paul had led them to the study of the Old Testament and its prophecies. It would not be difficult in his absence to persuade them that the Mosaic Law had never been abrogated, and that those who accepted Jesus as the Messiah would have to conform to all its precepts.

The crisis needed sharp treatment, and the letter to the Galatians stands alone among St. Paul's writings for its directness and severity. It reflects clearly St. Paul's own personal character and feelings. The Galatians were his first converts from heathenism, and were very dear to him. His letter is marked not only by the zeal of the teacher, but the tenderness and wounded affection of a spiritual father. The opening words are significant : " Paul, an apostle (not from men, neither through man, but through Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead)."

After a very brief greeting, unaccompanied by his usual words of thanksgiving, he plunges directly into his subject. He states in the sternest and most uncompromising manner that the Gospel he had delivered to them was not his own, but the absolute revelation of God, and that anything which contradicts it is false.

" I marvel that ye are so quickly removing from him that called you in the grace of Christ unto a different gospel ; which is not another *gospel* : only there are some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema."

Briefly and powerfully he reviews his relation with the older apostles since his conversion. He insists on the independent value of his own call ; he has had his Gospel directly from the Lord Jesus. He had indeed, at long intervals, conferred with the original apostles, and had obtained

St. Paul's
spiritual
authority.

their approval of the teaching which he had given to the Gentiles, but they had "imparted nothing" to him (Gal. ii. 6).

St. James, St. Peter, St. John had given him "the right hands of fellowship", and had consented to a division of spheres of work. He was to go to the Gentiles and they to the Jews. He had even so far vindicated the liberty of Gentile Christians and the absolute equality of Jews and Gentiles within the Church, as to "resist to the face" St. Peter at Antioch (p. 44), when for the moment he and others had yielded to the Judaizing party. St. Paul on that occasion had met this "dissimulation" or time-serving attitude with a direct challenge which apparently St. Peter had taken in good part. Why, he asked, should Jews who have come to recognise that it is faith in Christ and not the works of the Law which "justifies" a man—Jews who have themselves taken advantage of the liberty which Christ has brought them—seek to impose the yoke of the Law on the necks of the Gentiles? Then in vivid and impassioned words he proceeds to describe the change that has passed upon his own attitude to life:

"For I through the law died unto the law, that I might live unto God.¹ I have been crucified with Christ; yet I live; and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me: and that *life* which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, *the faith* which is in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself up for me" (Gal. ii. 19-20).

Having thus indicated his own apostolic authority, and told the truth about his relations with the older apostles, he turns again to the Galatians themselves. How can they take up an attitude which really contradicts all their previous Christian experience?

The folly
of the
Galatians.

"O foolish Galatians, who did bewitch you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was openly set forth crucified? This only would I learn from you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now perfected in the flesh? Did ye suffer so many things in vain? if it be indeed in vain. He therefore that supplieth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you,

¹ *I.e.* the very powerlessness of the law to make him righteous has proved to him that nothing less is needed than a death to the old life, and a new birth in Christ.

doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith ? ” (Gal. iii. 1-5).

Thus he appeals to their acceptance of Christ, to the recognised fact that they had actually received the Holy Spirit ; that they had begun to live the Christian life ; that miracles were being worked, and sufferings endured. And all this without the Mosaic Law !

He then proceeds to point out to them the true meaning of What is the Old Testament itself. They had never grasped its the meaning of the principles. Salvation through faith rather than by Law ? outward observances is its inward teaching.

He seizes upon the great example of Abraham, of whom it is recorded, in Gen. xv. 6, that “ he believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness ”. The Divine covenant with Abraham, to which Jews and Christians alike looked back ; the great promise to him that in him all nations should be blessed, could not rest upon the observances of a Law which was not given till 430 years afterwards, but upon faith ; *i.e.* upon a personal relationship between the soul and God. In this sense Gentiles, alike with Jews, St. Paul maintains, shared in the covenant and the promises : “ they which be of faith are blessed with the faithful Abraham ”. Prophecy, too, had asserted that faith was the great secret of religion. “ The righteous shall live by faith ” (Hab. ii. 4). The Law, given after Abraham’s time, did not disannul the promises to faith. Its inferiority to the promise is suggested by the very fact of its mediation by angel and through Moses. Such mediation implies two parties, and if either fail, the covenant is broken. But the promise proceeds from God alone, one and supreme, not an agreement but a gift. The function of the Law was disciplinary and educational, in order to convince men of sin, and of the impossibility of attaining to righteousness by any outward observances.

“ So that the law hath been our tutor¹ to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith is come, we are no longer under a tutor. For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were

¹ Lit. our “ *paedagogos* ”, *i.e.* the slave who conducted us to the school of Christ.

baptized into Christ did put on Christ. There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female : for ye all are one man in Christ Jesus. And if ye are Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, heirs according to promise " (Gal. iii. 24-29).

This remarkable thought of the temporary, parenthetic, and educational office of the Law he then proceeds to develop. The Gospel marks the coming of age of those who had hitherto been 'in bondage' to an external and rudimentary sort of training. He seems to be including heathen as well as Jews in this : the former having received some education through "natural religion", "the elements or rudiments of the world", the latter through the Law. But now all is changed for both, through the supreme event of the Incarnation.

"But when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, that he might redeem them which were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father. So that thou art no longer a bondservant, but a son ; and if a son, then an heir through God " (Gal. iv. 4-7).

From this he draws the daring conclusion that for a heathen convert to adopt the practices of Judaism is equivalent to a turning back to his old heathen state of bondage to **Christian** "the weak and beggarly rudiments" ; to seek to be **Liberty**. circumcised after baptism is to apostatise from Christ and to fall from grace.

He also finds an illustration of the two conditions of liberty in Christ, and bondage to the Law in an allegorical explanation of the incident of Abraham's being commanded to send away Hagar and Ishmael. These, he says, represent the condition of spiritual bondage in which the earthly Jerusalem is still bound fast ; Sarah and Isaac, on the other hand, represent the Christian covenant of promise and liberty. They are like "Jerusalem which is above", the heavenly city. Christians, like Isaac, are the children of promise ; and he significantly warns the Galatians that they must expect still to be persecuted by those who are "born after the flesh", just as Isaac was persecuted by the mockery of Ishmael. What is the conclusion ? "With freedom

did Christ set us free : stand fast therefore, and be not entangled again in a yoke of bondage " (Gal. v. 1).

Teaching like this, concerning Christian liberty and emancipation from the Law, inspiring as it is, was of course specially liable to misinterpretation. As a matter of fact, it was **Christian Morality.** frequently perverted into antinomianism, the tendency to disparage moral restriction, and the need of holiness. Hence St. Paul devotes most of the latter part of his letter to enforcing the positive duties of the Christian life, and warning against sin : " For ye, brethren, were called for freedom : only use not freedom for an occasion to the flesh, but through love be servants one to another."

The eternal warfare of flesh and spirit is not over. To be set free from the Law must mean a life lived under the guidance and rule of the Spirit. " Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are *these*, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths, factions, divisions, heresies, envyings, drunkenness, revellings, and such like : of the which I forewarn you, even as I did forewarn you, that they which practise such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance : against such there is no law. And they that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts thereof " (Gal. v. 19-24).

Thus Christian liberty is no easier path than that of Jewish observances. On the contrary, those who were urging the Galatians to adopt the latter were doing it for unworthy motives. Under cover of an outward show of observance of the Law, they were endeavouring to escape persecution ' for the Cross of Christ ' ; to escape " the offence of the Cross " ; to live an easier sort of life than Paul preached. For it is much easier to keep the letter of regulations than to think out and develop conscientiously a great principle. In eloquent words the Apostle concludes by shewing that the Christian's life is a death with Christ, and a rebirth into a new world :

" But far be it from me to glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world hath been crucified unto me, and I unto the world. For neither is circumcision anything,

**The Glory
of the
Cross.**

nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as shall walk by this rule, peace be upon them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God " (Gal. vi. 14-16). Nor is he urging the Galatians to any higher ideal than he himself has embraced. In the scars of his sufferings and persecutions, he is marked as the bondservant of Christ. " From henceforth let no man trouble me : for I bear branded on my body the marks of Jesus " (*ib.* 17).

We do not know what the immediate effect of this burning epistle was upon the Galatians, but its originality, its largeness of view, its enthusiasm for liberty, had an influence far wider than its immediate purpose. It contains the very essence of St. Paul's conception of the Gospel ; and it is noteworthy that when he set himself to write a letter to the Romans, a letter evidently intended to be his own contribution to the spiritual life of a community which he must have felt was destined to lead in Christendom, he follows much the same line and repeats or develops his Galatian argument.

Meanwhile the Corinthian Church in St. Paul's absence had received another eminent teacher, who seems to have been thoroughly in sympathy with the Apostle, and to whom he refers afterwards in the most affectionate manner. **Apollos.**

This was the Alexandrian Jew Apollos, a man of great learning, and deeply read in the Scriptures. He first appears (Acts xviii. 24), as coming to Ephesus, and preaching of Jesus as the Messiah, but himself as yet outside the Christian Church and having only been baptized by St. John the Baptist. He shewed true greatness in his willingness to learn, as well as to teach ; and coming under the influence of Priscilla and Aquila, he received the fuller Christian truth. Becoming now an accredited teacher of the Church, he was invited by the Christians of Achaia to visit them. The Ephesian brethren encouraged him to do so, and wrote a letter of commendation. Arriving at Corinth, he gave the greatest spiritual help to the Church, and inflicted crushing blows in controversy with the Jews " shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was the Christ ".

We next find St. Paul himself at Ephesus, having passed through " the upper country "—the high road which led from the hills of Phrygia almost directly west to the sea. Here he found another remarkable example of the long effects of the work of

St. John the Baptist, which only needed full Christian initiation to complete. At Ephesus he met a little congregation of about twelve, who claimed to be "disciples". He inquired of them whether they had received the Holy Ghost, *i.e.* whether their baptism, which he assumed at first to be Christian, had been completed by the apostolic rite of 'confirmation', the laying on of hands (*cf.* Acts viii.). They innocently replied that they had "not so much as heard the Holy Ghost was given". Probably they did not mean to deny knowledge of the existence of the Holy Spirit. They could hardly have done so in the face of the Baptist's own teaching. But they were not aware of the new outpouring of the Spirit of Christ, through His Church and her ministers. "Into what then were ye baptized?" he asked. "Into John's baptism," was the reply. The Apostle at once pointed out to them that the Baptist's rite was but a preliminary sign of repentance for sin, and that John had himself pointed on his hearers to belief in the coming Christ. Like Apollos, the twelve were willing to learn; they received Christian baptism, and the laying on of hands from St. Paul himself; and the new gift of the Spirit manifested itself in their case, as in that of Cornelius (Acts x. 46) by speaking "with tongues", and the utterance of "prophecy".

St. Paul now commenced his long ministry in the great and rich city of Ephesus, cosmopolitan and splendid; not only a famous emporium of trade but noted for its idolatrous worship of Diana (Artemis), its superstitions and magic, and its wickedness. This ministry is described briefly and vividly in Acts xix. 8, etc. At first, following his invariable practice, St. Paul preached in the synagogue. His theme for three months was "the Kingdom of God". But Jewish opposition and bitterness soon appeared. Probably St. Paul's Catholic conception of 'the Kingdom' was again too great for the narrow mind of Judaism. "Some were hardened and disobedient, and spoke evil before the multitude (*i.e.* no doubt the Gentile hearers as well as the Jews) of the Way." Again came the inevitable separation. St. Paul left the synagogue and transferred his disciples to "the school of Tyrannus". This was probably the meeting-place of the disciples of some Greek philosopher or rhetorician, and part of one of the large

'gymnasia' of the city, where just as in the 'baths' of Rome, lectures were given and classes and discussions held. For two years this 'school' was the centre of Christian preaching, and the influence of it pervaded the whole province of Asia. In addition to his eloquence, St. Paul's miraculous powers produced a great impression. They are described as 'special' or of 'no common' sort. Healings and exorcism were performed not only by the Apostle's direct act, but even by the medium of 'handkerchiefs or aprons' which had touched his body.

In a city so given to the practice of magic as Ephesus, such marvels must have raised the greatest excitement. Here, men thought, must be a spell or a 'name' stronger than Ephesian anything in the repertory of ordinary magicians. magic. A crisis came when some travelling Jewish magicians who professed to cast out devils tried to copy St. Paul's miracles, by using the sacred name of Jesus as a spell. This was attempted in particular by the seven sons of Sceva, a chief priest. But two of them (Acts xix. 16) were violently attacked, wounded, stripped of their clothes, and driven out of the house by a demoniac, whom they were trying in this way to cure. "Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are ye?" was the answer of the evil spirit, speaking by the mouth of the sufferer. The miraculous powers of the apostolic age were not incantations, but the work of faith.

This strange event caused astonishment and fear throughout Ephesus; and it had a remarkable effect on those who had already embraced the Gospel. Many of them, though baptized, were still clinging in secret to their "black spae-books" and their magical practices. A general and public confession of these things took place. And a startling evidence of sincerity was seen in the great bonfire of "occult" writings which the Ephesian converts made. These books were considered of great value. Their prices were estimated at 50,000 pieces of silver: to burn them in this way shewed a real change of mind and a total break with the past, regardless of consequences. It was a great triumph of Christ over all the power of evil in Ephesus. "So mightily", adds St. Luke, "grew the word of the Lord and prevailed."

CHAPTER IX

THE THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY (*continued*): FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS

For all Thy Church, O Lord, we intercede ;
Make Thou our sad divisions soon to cease :
Draw us the nearer each to each, we plead,
By drawing all to Thee, O Prince of peace.
Thus may we all one Bread, one Body be,
Through this blest Sacrament of unity.

THE success of St. Paul's ministry at Ephesus was clouded for him by trouble with the newly founded Church he had left behind him at Corinth. Humanly speaking, such trouble was to be expected. A Gentile Church which had sprung so rapidly into vigorous life, amid such dangerous surroundings as at Corinth, was almost certain to fail to maintain a high standard of Christian life. Apparently the first adverse news which reached St. Paul was to the effect that immorality was being treated lightly. He wrote a letter, no longer extant, but alluded to in 1 Cor. v. 9, commanding the Corinthians to have no fellowship with people of impure life. This letter was misunderstood and had little effect. Soon a more serious and detailed report of Corinthian misdoings came to the Apostle from some members of "the household of Chloe", probably some lady of position who had become a Christian. It was reported that divisions and contentions were rife; that the Corinthians were forming religious parties under various names, Paul, Apollos, Cephas (Peter), or even of Christ Himself. There was also a general report, which may have been corroborated by the dependants of Chloe, that immorality was common among the Corinthian Christians, and a flagrant case was reported in

which a Christian had actually taken the wife of his own father.

These problems were further complicated by an embassy from the Corinthians themselves. Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus arrived bearing a letter from the Church asking for guidance on a number of questions practical and doctrinal. The spirit which this embassy displayed was good ; but the questions they raised and the information they supplied as to the Corinthian Church gave the greatest cause for anxiety to the Apostle. The result was the writing of the *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, the most valuable of all the New Testament writings for illustrating the conditions of primitive Christianity.

First, after an affectionate greeting (in which he combines the name of "Sosthenes a brother" with his own), and a ready recognition of how much there was to be thankful for in the spiritual life of the Corinthian Church, the Apostle attacks the matter which is evidently uppermost in his mind—the spirit of disunion.

The First
Epistle to
the Cor-
inthians.

"Now I beseech you, brethren, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you ; but that ye be perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgement. For it hath been signified unto me concerning you, my brethren, by them which are of the household of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I mean, that each one of you saith, I am of Paul ; and I of Apollos ; and I of Cephas ; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided ? was Paul crucified for you ? or were ye baptized into the name of Paul ? " (1 Cor. i. 10-13).¹

Disunion
and its
causes.

Such questions are unanswerable. But whence had come the necessity of asking them ? The Apostle evidently thinks the

¹ Here the Apostle adds words (vv. 14-17) which have sometimes been misunderstood. He thanks God that he had himself baptized none of the Corinthians except Crispus, Gaius, and the household of Stephanas "lest any man should say that ye were baptized in my name . . . for Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel". Of course he does not mean that baptism was not part of his gospel ; the universal necessity and the profound significance of baptism are proclaimed most clearly in his writings. He means that the actual administration of the Sacrament was not, as a rule, part of his work ; it was performed by one of his fellow-helpers. And in the case of the Corinthians, he was glad that such was his practice, as it helped to prevent a "Paul party" being formed of those who had been baptized personally by him.

reason is to be found in a fundamentally wrong attitude towards the Gospel. The central feature of the Gospel is the Cross of Christ, the keenest rebuke to all human self-seeking and pride. The Corinthians admired wisdom, human eloquence, greatness, and show. To such an attitude the Cross seemed foolishness : even as to Jewish pride it had been a ' stumbling-block '. Just as the Master had set before His disciples the ' little child ' as the pattern of the conditions of entering the Kingdom, so the Apostle bids the vainglorious Corinthians learn the great paradox of the appeal of the Cross.

" For behold your calling, brethren, how that not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called :¹ but God chose the foolish things of the world, that he might put to shame them that are wise ; and God chose the weak things of the world, that he might put to shame the things that are strong ; and the base things of the world, and the things that are despised, did God choose, yea and the things that are not, that he might bring to nought the things that are : that no flesh should glory before God " (1 Cor. i. 26-29).

He appeals in words of imperishable power to his own method of preaching the Gospel. He had discarded those human artifices which might naturally have pleased the intellectual Greek. Nay, his own bodily weakness had thrown into still greater relief the inherent power of his message.

" And I, brethren, when I came unto you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the mystery of God. For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but demonstration of the Spirit and of power : that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God " (1 Cor. ii. 1-5).

Not that there were not depths of ' wisdom ' in the Gospel—but it was a wisdom of a different order from that which the natural man could attain to by any intellectual effort. It was a

¹ *I.e.* the actual Corinthian Church consisted for the most part of poor, simple, and insignificant people.

wisdom revealed by God to His Church, and to be understood only by those who surrendered themselves to the teaching of His Spirit. It was not a wisdom of this world, but wisdom "which none of the rulers of this world knoweth. For had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." It appealed only to "the spiritual", to him who had been taught by God, who had surrendered the natural mind of unconverted man, and had learned by the Spirit "the mind of Christ".

The Corinthians still lacked this mind, they were still 'babes', uninstructed in the deepest sense, still 'carnal'. Hence came their strife and divisions, and their party spirit. Hence it was that they attached themselves to the names of individual teachers, instead of recognising that God was all in all. "I planted," says the Apostle, "Apollos watered, but God gave the increase." Then, changing his image, he compares himself to the man who lays the foundation, on which another builds. But, even here, men are nought, and Christ is all. "Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ." And all human work built on this foundation will have to be tested by the searching fire, not of human judgment, but of the great day of God's award.

Christ,
not man,
the only
founda-
tion.

"But if any man buildeth on the foundation gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay, stubble; each man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it is revealed in fire; and the fire itself shall prove each man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work shall abide which he built thereon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as through fire" (1 Cor. iii. 12-15).¹

The thought of building on a foundation here leads him to suggest a truth which is developed in the later epistles. The Church itself, the whole company of believers, is the temple of God. Disunion and schism are nothing less than attempts to destroy this great building of God. "Know ye not that ye are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man destroyeth the temple of God, him shall God destroy;

¹ *I.e.* he will have to pass through the fire, whether of the intermediate state, or of God's awful holiness at the Day of Judgment. He will only be saved like one rushing out of a burning house.

for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are " (1 Cor. iii. 16, 17).

Chapter iv. deals further with the office and authority of the Apostles themselves, which the Corinthians failed to understand.

What They are not popular leaders to be praised or blamed,
are the or to have their names made into catchwords. They
Apostles ? are to be accounted as " ministers of Christ and
stewards of the mysteries of God " ; they are not to be judged
by man, but by the Lord Himself at His coming, " who both
will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make mani-
fest the counsels of the heart ". Then, in a passage of extra-
ordinary eloquence and irony, St. Paul contrasts the spiritual
pride and self-importance of the Corinthians with the misery and
persecutions which the Apostles themselves were enduring for the
sake of the Gospel.

" Already are ye filled, already ye are become rich, ye have reigned without us : yea and I would that ye did reign, that we also might reign with you. For, I think, God hath set forth us the apostles last of all, as men doomed to death : for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ ; we are weak, but ye are strong ; ye have glory, but we have dishonour. Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place ; and we toil, working with our own hands : being reviled, we bless ; being persecuted, we endure ; being defamed, we intreat : we are made as the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things, even until now.

" I write not these things to shame you, but to admonish you as my beloved children. For though ye should have ten thousand tutors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers : for in Christ Jesus I begat you through the gospel " (1 Cor. iv. 8-15).

Having dealt with the charge of disunion, and exposed the hidden causes of Corinthian pride and party spirit, the Apostle now proceeds to consider more specific charges. And first he warns those who are " puffed up ", as if they were now independent of his authority, that he intends shortly to visit them, and show its power. " What will ye ? " he asks. " Shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love and a spirit of meekness ? "

Not only is there a general laxness with regard to purity of life : the Corinthians are actually tolerating one of their number who is living in incest, having married his father's wife. Christian purity. There must be no half-measures here. The morally apostate Christian must be excommunicated ; and this not merely in obedience to apostolic authority, it must be an act of the Church itself, " ye being gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ ". The offender must be " delivered unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh ". This apparently means that being cast out of the Church, he is put back, as it were, into the kingdom of Satan, from which by his conversion and baptism he had been delivered. And such excommunication, like that of Ananias and Sapphira, may have a visible seal set upon it by some Divine judgment of disease and death for " the flesh ". Harsh though such a sentence may seem, it is for the benefit of the sinner himself that he may be led to repentance, " that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus " : and it is essential for the welfare of the Church. " Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump ? "

Then, reverting to the former letter, which had been misunderstood, he explains that the command to have no company with fornicators referred not to the heathen world (" for then must ye needs go out of the world "), but to the Christian brotherhood. There must be no fellowship with one " that is named a brother ", if he is either " a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner ; with such a one, no, not to eat ". In the next chapter (vi.) the Apostle returns to this subject, the absolute inconsistency of immoral living with fellowship in the Christian society. The warning is pressed home to the individual Christian. His body has been consecrated to the living, risen Lord Jesus. It is " a member of Christ, a temple of the Holy Ghost ". " Ye are not your own : for ye are bought with a price : glorify God therefore in your body."

Without doubt St. Paul is here dealing with one of the greatest perils that threatened the new converts from heathenism. Spiritual exaltation and enthusiasm, even spiritual gifts, would only bring about a greater ruin if holiness were neglected. Grave moral sins were the characteristic of heathen society. " Such ", he says, " were some of you, but ye were washed, but ye were sanctified,

but ye were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God ". This ideal of holiness must be maintained at all costs. Even lawful Christian liberty must be kept in check. " All things are lawful for me, but not all things are expedient : all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any."

In the course of this tremendous insistence on Christian purity, the Apostle deals (vi. 1-8) with another grave fault which had come to his ears respecting the conduct of the Corinthians. The authority of the Church. Not only were they quarrelling with one another; they carried these quarrels before the heathen judges. To St. Paul this litigious spirit was not only a breach of charity between brethren, it shewed a total lack of understanding as to the real nature, authority, and dignity of the Church of Christ.

Alluding no doubt to some previous teaching he had given them (perhaps with reference to Dan. vii. 18-22), he asks indignantly, " Or know ye not that the saints shall judge the world ? and if the world is judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters ? Know ye not that we shall judge angels ? how much more, things that pertain to this life ? " (1 Cor. vi. 2, 3). There is no uncertain sound about the Apostle's decision in this matter. Disputes between Christians must be settled by Christians. It would be better to be defrauded or suffer rather than to act as the Corinthians are doing. (It should be noted how exactly St. Paul's ruling agrees with the principles laid down by Christ Himself in St. Matt. xviii. 15-18).

Having now dealt with the charges brought against the Corinthians, the Apostle in the rest of his letter (vii.-xvi.) seems in the main to be answering the questions which the Corinthians themselves had asked.

I. *The relation of the sexes.*—The Christian teaching with regard to the relation of the sexes is fundamentally different from that of the non-Christian world. It is based upon laws laid down by the Lord Himself. These had probably not been embodied in a written Gospel at the time when St. Paul was writing ; but they were evidently well known to him. The Corinthians had apparently asked (*a*) whether celibacy was preferable to marriage on religious grounds ; (*b*) whether divorce

was permissible, especially in the case where one partner was a Christian and the other not; (c) whether widows might marry again.

To question (a) St. Paul seems certainly to lay down in the abstract that the unmarried state, if embraced with the motive of a more undivided service of God, is a better and higher condition than that of marriage. "I would", he says, "that all men were even as I myself." And "He that is unmarried is careful for the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord: but he that is married is careful for the things of the world, how he may please his wife" (1 Cor. vii. 32-33). A further reason for this preference of the unmarried state the Apostle finds in the conditions of the Church. No doubt he foresaw persecution, and he speaks apparently as if he anticipated the speedy coming of the Lord—"the time is shortened—the fashion of this world passeth away".

The same principles seem to underlie his advice about "virgins" (1 Cor. vii. 34-40). This is usually understood to refer to the question whether fathers should seek to have their daughters married, or to keep them single that they might be careful for the things of the Lord. But another possible explanation may be found in the custom of the early Church of 'spiritual marriages', in which women married, but did not live as wives with their husbands. St. Paul sees the grave difficulties of such a relationship, and while approving it in the abstract as the better condition, he is careful to point out that there is no sin in a real marriage and the bearing of children. He recognises that such counsels of perfection are not for all Christians nor even for the majority. He even advises marriage as the normal condition for all. "Let each have his own wife and each woman her own husband", though he is careful to say that he says it "by permission and not of commandment" "each man hath his own gift from God, one after this manner and another after that".

With regard to (b) divorce, the answer is clear and uncompromising. It rests upon a positive commandment of Christ Himself, who forbade divorce. "But unto the married I give charge, yea not I, but the Lord, That the wife depart not from her husband (but and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or else be reconciled to her husband); and that the husband leave not his wife" (1 Cor. vii. 10, 11). Divorce.

The only question which might legitimately arise was that of a marriage in which one partner was a Christian and the other not. Here St. Paul states his own opinion ("I, not the Lord"). There must be no separation unless it is the distinct wish of the heathen partner. If they continue to live together, the marriage must be considered holy, and sanctified by the presence of the Christian partner.

Speaking generally, social arrangements and conditions must not be interfered with by the acceptance of Christianity. "Let each man, wherein he was called, therein abide with God." The Jewish Christian is not to try to make himself as a Gentile, nor the Gentile Christian to seek circumcision. The married man is not to seek to be unmarried; nor the slave to think it necessary to attain freedom. The Gospel has lifted all alike into a condition where such differences no longer count. "Ye were bought with a price: become not the bond-servants of men."

(c) The remarriage of widows (and widowers) is treated on the same lines. It is better, considering "the present distress" for those who are loosed from the marriage relationship to remain single (for some later modifications of this advice see p. 188). But remarriage, when the previous partner is dead, is not sinful. Each person must judge for him or herself. One condition only is imposed. The marriage of one who is now a Christian must be "in the Lord", *i.e.* to a Christian only.

II. *Concerning food offered to idols.*—This question, which had evidently been discussed by the Corinthians themselves, was a very serious one, with wide-spreading complications in social life and intercourse. Idolatry did not merely concern what we should consider formal acts of worship. From these Christians were naturally debarred. But heathen sacrifices were bound up with social observances and especially with eating and drinking. Animals sold for food had often been consecrated to some divinity; and the meat put before guests at any meal might frequently be part of what had been actually offered in sacrifice to an idol. Could a Christian conscientiously touch such food? To refuse to do so would practically end social intercourse between the Christian and his heathen neighbours or relations.

St. Paul's answer is not logically complete, though the practical conclusions are sufficiently obvious. Idols are "nothing", he says; and a Christian who is clear on ^{The rule} this point, might without sin partake of the sacrificial ^{of charity.} meat. But it is all important that he should be careful not to wound the conscience of another Christian. His liberty might easily become a stumbling-block to the weaker or more ignorant brother. Charity demands in such a case that he should refrain from eating, lest he be thought to be actually taking part in idolatrous worship. From this point of view, St. Paul's emphatic conclusion is: "Wherefore, if meat maketh my brother to stumble, I will eat no flesh for evermore, that I make not my brother to stumble" (1 Cor. viii. 13).

This question of the limitation which tender regard for the souls of others imposes on Christian liberty, leads, in chapter ix., to a long digression of a personal nature. St. Paul urges his own apostolic authority, and, side by side with that, ^{St. Paul's personal liberty.} his own personal freedom. He has, he claims, liberty to eat and drink all things, 'clean' or 'unclean'—to be married like St. Peter or "the brethren of the Lord"—to receive maintenance from the Church in return for his ministerial work. Indeed, the Lord Himself had ordained "that they which proclaim the Gospel should live of the Gospel" (cf. St. Matt. x. 10). Nevertheless St. Paul has claimed none of these privileges. He has willingly forgone them in order to have greater influence in winning converts by his preaching. And to preach the Gospel is a responsibility which he can in no case evade. "I have nothing to glory of; for necessity is laid upon me: yea, woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel." And here he characteristically describes his own sympathetic attitude in adapting himself and his methods to different hearers.

"For though I was free from all *men*, I brought myself under bondage to all, that I might gain the more. And to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, not being myself under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; to them that are without law,¹ as without law, not being without law to God, but

¹ This does not mean necessarily "the lawless", but those who had no acquaintance with the Mosaic Law.

under law to Christ, that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak I became weak, that I might gain the weak : I am become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some ” (1 Cor. ix. 19-23).

And this self-restraint which he has voluntarily exercised for the sake of others is also for the sake of his own soul. For, as yet, salvation is not assured for any. The Christian race, the Christian battle, need surely as much self-discipline as the competitors in the Isthmian games (so well known to the Corinthians) would be bound to exercise to win their fading coronal of pine.

“ And I do all things for the gospel’s sake, that I may be a joint partaker thereof. Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize ? Even so run, that ye may attain. And every man that striveth in the games is temperate in all things. Now they *do it* to receive a corruptible crown ; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, as not uncertainly ; so fight I, as not beating the air ” (*ibid.* 24-26).

Not merely discipline, but even vigorous repression of the bodily desires he finds needful : “ I buffet my body, and bring it into bondage : lest by any means, after that I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected ” (*ibid.* 27). [The Greek words used are very vigorous : literally, “ I beat and bruise my body ”, and “ make a slave ” of it.]

This thought of possible failure seems to lead (in x. 1-13) to further reasons why this ‘ liberty ’ should be held in stern check. **Warnings from Old Testament History.** The ancient history of Israel shewed clearly enough that spiritual privileges brought with them no immunity from grievous falls, even from apostasy. Though the Israelites had been all led by the pillar of cloud, and had passed through the Red Sea, as through some baptism from death into life ; though all had eaten the manna from heaven, and drank of the water flowing supernaturally from a rock (a type of Christ)—yet many had fallen into idolatry in the wilderness, into heathen excesses, into presumption (“ tempting God ”), into murmuring—and had incurred the punishments of plagues and serpents and the destroying angel. “ Now these things happened unto them by way of example ; and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall ” (1 Cor. x. 11, 12).

If charity, and a godly fear for one's own salvation, ought to teach the Corinthians to be humble and careful in the exercise of what they rightly considered to be Christian freedom, there was yet a further consideration. Idolatry was still a real peril; to partake of meats offered to idols might easily lead after all into participation in worship offered to demons. This may seem inconsistent with St. Paul's previous statement that an idol was nothing (see x. 19, below). But the usual heathen accompaniment of sacrifice, the non-moral, and often immoral character of heathen worship, might soon transform the worship of these "nothings" into a service of Satan. And here the Christian must make his definite choice: there could be no compromise.

Dangers
of Com-
promise.

This leads to a most important statement about the Christian Eucharist. St. Paul clearly regards the Eucharist as itself of a *sacrificial* character. It is on a line with both the Jewish and the heathen sacrifices in this respect, that to partake of it implies a real communion with the God who is worshipped. And those who are thus brought into union with Christ must run no risks of ever seeming to enter into communion with the heathen gods and demons. The whole passage is intensely interesting.

The
Eucharist
is the one
Christian
Sacrifice.

"I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a communion of the body of Christ? seeing that we, who are many, are one bread, one body: for we all partake of the one bread. Behold Israel after the flesh: have not they which eat the sacrifices communion with the altar? What say I then? that a thing sacrificed to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? But *I say*, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils,¹ and not to God: and I would not that ye should have communion with devils. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot partake of the table of the Lord, and of the table of devils. Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?" (1 Cor. x. 15-22).

¹ *I.e.* quite apart from the question of whether the heathen idols represent any really existing divinities (St. Paul himself thinks not), whatever is not sacrificed to the one true God is being offered to God's enemy.

In conclusion, "all things are lawful; but all things are not expedient". Avoid scruples and questionings about meat, but, still more, avoid the danger of hurting another's conscience by indulgences which may be right for oneself, but harmful to another. "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. Give no occasion of stumbling, either to Jews, or to Greeks, or to the church of God: even as I also please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the *profit* of the many, that they may be saved. Be ye imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ" (1 Cor. x. 31-33).

III. *Questions relating to Christian worship.*—St. Paul had evidently laid down certain ordinances of public worship for his newly founded Churches. Further questions had arisen with regard to these:

(1) *What is to be the behaviour of women in the congregation?* Elsewhere St. Paul clearly teaches that the two sexes are essentially equal 'in Christ', just as Jew and Gentile, or master and servant, are equal. They are both admitted to the full privileges of the Gospel. But there is, he lays down, a rightful natural subordination of the woman. Her being was derived from man; and man is her "head". And this is to be symbolised by the woman veiling her head while engaged in public prayer, or even if she is exercising the gift of 'prophesying'. This veil is a sign of man's authority over the woman, and it is also to be worn "because of the angels", who are invisibly present at the Christian worship. The male worshipper, on the contrary, must not cover his head, as 'he is the image and glory of God'. With equal definiteness, a little later (xiv. 34-35), women are forbidden altogether to 'speak', *i.e.* to take an active lead in the worship or preaching of the Church (cf. 1 Tim. ii. 11, 12).

(2) *How is the Lord's Supper to be celebrated?* (xi. 17-34). This is one of the most important passages in the writings of St. Paul. It does not appear that the Corinthians had asked a question about it, but the Apostle had learned their practice, and strongly condemns it. They had clearly not recognised the peculiar and awful sacredness of the Eucharist, but were celebrating it as if it were a common social entertainment, to which each brought his own contribution.

Distinction
of the
sexes.

Corinthian
irrever-
ence.

Those who brought much did not even share it with the poorer. Some ate or drank to excess—others had nothing.

In severe contrast with this irreverent parody of the fundamental Christian ordinance, the Apostle solemnly de- The unique sacredness of the
scribes the institution of the Eucharist; an account which he claims to have received from the Lord Eucharist. Himself, and which is certainly the earliest *written* record of what was done at the Last Supper.

“ For I received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, how that the Lord Jesus in the night in which he was betrayed took bread; and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, This is my body, which is for you: this do in remembrance of me.¹ In like manner also the cup, after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in my blood: this do, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.¹ For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord’s death till he come ” (1 Cor. xi. 23-26).

From this he deduces (1) that the Eucharist is not a mere social meal as the Corinthians imagined, but a solemn proclamation of the Lord’s death until He comes again; (2) that to eat and drink of it “ unworthily ” is grave sacrilege, an eating and drinking of ‘ judgment ’ to oneself. A proof of this St. Paul points out in the abnormal amount of sickness and death which had occurred among the Corinthians themselves. If any would escape the danger of eating unworthily, he must ‘ prove himself ’, and judge himself, doubtless with a view to searching out personal sin, and testing his motives. But why is it so grave a thing to put the Lord’s Supper on a level with ordinary entertainments? Because by so doing, we are “ not discerning the [Lord’s] Body ”, *i.e.* not putting a difference between common food and drink and that which the Church has always believed the Eucharist to be (by the plain meaning of Christ’s own words), the actual Body and Blood of the Lord.

St. Paul’s warning seems to have borne fruit rapidly. We hear no more of the Eucharist being confused with a common social meal. Church history shews that certain significant changes were made at a very early date. The ‘ Agape ’, or love-feast, was separated from the Eucharist and partaken of after-

¹ Or “ for the memorial of Me ”.

wards. The celebration of the Eucharist was transferred from the evening to the early morning.

The further consideration of Christian worship is prefaced by a section on 'spiritual gifts' or 'spiritual persons', apparently in answer to some inquiry of the Corinthians as to what sort of gifts were most to be desired. The whole passage clearly implies that Christians were conscious of some new Power which had come into their lives, and showed His presence by supernatural utterances, chiefly of two sorts, "speaking with tongues" and "prophesying". Both were extraordinary and ecstatic, but the first was largely unintelligible; it produced indeed an effect of astonishment and awe on the hearers and was a witness of a Divine presence; but it did not "edify": prophesying on the contrary was intelligible, and it was not so much the foretelling of the future, though this it was sometimes, as the authoritative declaration of Christian truth. These gifts evidently played a large part in the worship and the life of the Christian society of Corinth.

First of all St. Paul lays down a rule for distinguishing true inspiration from false. This was necessary, for not only is all religious enthusiasm liable to self-deceiving, but, as the Corinthians well knew, the heathen idol-worshippers themselves had those who professed to utter oracles under inspiration from the idol. The test is the plain one of acceptance or rejection of Jesus as "Lord". "Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking in the Spirit of God saith, Jesus is anathema; and no man can say, Jesus is Lord, but in the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor. xii. 3).

Next as to the relative importance or value of these gifts, which included, besides 'tongues' and 'prophecy', miracles, powers of healing diseases, such religious endowments as 'faith', 'wisdom', 'knowledge', and also what may be called the *official* gifts of "apostles, prophets, teachers". The Apostle lays down that all true Christian gifts are (1) the work of "the one and same Spirit dividing to each one severally even as He will". (2) They are analogous to the different functions of the body; all are necessary, those which appear small and ignoble as well as those which are thought honourable. Whatever gift each Christian possesses is to be valued and used as his contribution to the common good—avoiding rivalry or

'schism'. Each is a member in the body of Christ. (3) There is one pre-eminent gift of the Spirit, which all may win, and which is most of all to be desired, the gift of Charity or Love.

This leads to the Apostle's well-known and eloquent praise of Charity ¹ (xiii.). Without charity all other gifts are worthless.

"Tongues" are no more than "sounding brass and clanging cymbal": prophetic insight into mysteries; faith which can "remove mountains", are of no value to the possessor if he has not this. Even to give all one's property to the poor, or to suffer martyrdom by fire, is no profit to a man's soul, unless he has charity. Charity is the well-spring of the homely but most necessary virtues of the Christian life: "Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not provoked, taketh not account of evil" (xiii. 4-5). Her scope is unlimited, she "beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things".

The
supreme
gift of
Charity.

Charity outlasts all other gifts, enduring even into the eternal world; that world of which the Apostle's greater knowledge than other men leads him to speak with the more profound reserve and humility. "For we know in part, and we prophesy in part: but when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I felt as a child, I thought as a child: now that I am become a man, I have put away childish things. For now we see in a mirror, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I have been known. But now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love" (*ib.* 9-12).

Lastly, Charity is even greater than the two other supreme "theological virtues", which might alone be classed with it, faith and hope.

The next chapter (xiv.) deals with the practical value of the

¹ R.V. has adopted 'love' in the place of the older 'charity'. It is doubtful whether this is a wise change. St. Paul and the other New Testament writers have carefully avoided the usual Greek word for 'love', because of its impure heathen associations, and chosen a comparatively rare word to express the new and supernatural Christian virtue. For that reason, it might be well to continue to use 'charity' in English versions. On the other hand, of course, 'charity' has now somewhat narrow association in its ordinary use, being chiefly connected with almsgiving or tolerance, and to many minds, 'love', having lost its evil associations, may appear a better expression of St. Paul's meaning.

two gifts most in question, tongues and prophecy, with regard to Christian worship. The atmosphere is somewhat different to that which Christians of a later time are accustomed. ^{Prophecy preferable to} Indeed it was one which could not endure, and ^{Tongues.} was only possible in such a remarkable and supernatural outpouring of the Holy Spirit's influence as apparently existed in the first days of the Church. It was bound to give way to a more orderly and official manner of conducting Christian worship. St. Paul's words imply that each worshipper felt that he had some personal and public contribution to make to the service. "When ye come together, each one hath a psalm, hath teaching, hath a revelation, hath a tongue, hath an interpretation." The general principles laid down by the Apostle are *edification* and *order*. Prophecy, whose aim is to edify, to exhort, and to comfort others is to be preferred to the mysterious gift of tongues, which, without an interpreter, was of no real spiritual value to the community. An interesting allusion to the celebration of the Eucharist is to be noticed. There was apparently no fixed form of words, but the celebrant relied on his supernatural gifts of utterance. Here again, St. Paul says, it is important that what is said must not be in an unknown 'tongue', but in language intelligible to the ordinary worshipper. "Else if thou bless with the spirit, how shall he that filleth the place of the unlearned say the Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he knoweth not what thou sayest? For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified" (1 Cor. xiv. 16, 17). [Note here the beginnings at least of liturgical form. It was evidently customary for all the worshippers to say the "Amen" at the conclusion of the Eucharistic prayer in which the elements of bread and wine were "blessed".]

Also the Apostle insists upon *order*, and self-restraint. Not everyone present should speak, and not more than one at a time. "God is not a God of confusion, but of peace".

These commands are throughout given with a clear ring of authority. They are "the commandments of the Lord". They are the common practice of "all the churches", and must be conformed to. The Corinthians must not behave as if they were the originators or the sole possessors of the Gospel. Individual inspiration must bow to catholic custom and apostolic authority.

From these questions of Christian worship, the Apostle now passes to deal with one of the greatest mysteries of the Christian faith—the resurrection of the body. His magnificent statement in chapter xv. has been ever since the chief standard and guide of the Christian Church in dealing with this tremendous matter. He writes throughout with the authority of a prophet, as the inspired teacher of the Church, as one who had received what he teaches by immediate and supernatural communication from God Himself.

The Resurrection of the dead.

It is not clear whether the Corinthians had asked a question concerning the Resurrection: but the Apostle had learned that there existed a party among them which denied that there would be a resurrection of the dead. Doubtless we see here the influence of Greek thought. The idea of a future life was familiar both to the philosophers and to the “mystery-religions”. But the body was looked upon as the prison and the hindrance of the soul. The future life was conceived as a life for the soul alone—the soul set free from its earthly trammels. The idea of a renewed bodily life, even in an exalted and spiritualised form, was alien to Greek thought. The later Jews, on the other hand, had taught a bodily resurrection of the faithful in a somewhat crude and materialistic shape. Both these errors were no doubt “in the air” with the Christians at Corinth, and both must be warned against, though it is the former that St. Paul singles out for his first attack.

He begins by laying down as a firm foundation truth that the Gospel by which Christians hope for salvation has as its central truth the bodily Resurrection of Christ Himself. The risen Christ had been actually seen by Cephas (St. Peter; cf. St. Luke xxiv. 34), by the Apostles as a body on more than one occasion, by St. James, by “more than 500 brethren at once”, of whom the majority were still living, and even by St. Paul himself, *i.e.* at his conversion. The thought arouses a characteristic confession:

The bodily Resurrection of Christ.

“And last of all, as unto one born out of due time, he appeared to me also. For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not found vain; but I laboured more

abundantly than they all : yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me ” (1 Cor. xv. 8-10).

If this bodily Resurrection of Christ is not true, then indeed there is no ground for believing in a general resurrection of the dead. But if it is *not* true—other grave conclusions follow. The Apostles are false witnesses, their preaching is ‘vain’, empty, and worthless ; the belief of their converts is vain also ; their sins have not been forgiven ; the Christian dead are perished ; it was a vain hope that the Church breathed over their last sleep ;¹ nay, the Christian life itself is a huge mistake : separation and persecutions are being endured for a mere phantom. “ If in this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all men most pitiable ”. “. . . let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die ”.

But Christ *is* risen ; He is the ‘first-fruits’ ; the resurrection of humanity is bound up in Him. “ As in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive ”. Not yet indeed, for the last enemy to be destroyed by the Christ who sits already on the throne of the universe, is death. But come it will—and it will be ‘the end’—an end which will be a new beginning when all evil is destroyed ; all Christ’s enemies will be put under his feet, and God will be “ all in all ”.²

That and no less is the Christian faith, for which St. Paul is

¹ The difficult v. 29 was a puzzle even in antiquity. “ Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead ? If the dead rise not at all, why are they then baptized for them ? ” The usual explanation is that the Apostle is referring to some custom of baptism by proxy, on behalf of those who had died without receiving baptism. He does not appear to be sanctioning the practice, but only using it as an “argumentum ad hominem”. What a useless and vain thing such baptism must be even in the eyes of those who practise it, if the dead will never rise again !

² In connection with this final supremacy of God should be noted the well-known and ancient difficulty of v. 28. “ And when all things have been subjected unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subjected to him that did subject all things unto him, that God may be all in all ”. With this should be compared v. 24, in which Christ is spoken of as in the end “ delivering up the Kingdom to God, even the Father ”. The ‘Kingdom’ is that mediatorial reign of Christ in which His gifts are still being offered to man, and which is still in conflict with the world’s sin. At the end of this world, Christ’s Kingdom in that aspect will have accomplished its purpose. But this statement must be balanced by the two fundamental doctrines of the Incarnation, that Christ is ever true and eternal God, equal in Godhead to the Father, and that His human nature is not transitory, but once assumed will remain for ever united to His Divinity. St. Paul’s words, however, gave rise to some false teaching in the early Church, which is guarded against by the Nicene Creed, “ whose Kingdom shall have no end ”.

content to "fight with beasts" at Ephesus (an allusion to the agony of opposition which he had there to encounter), to "stand in jeopardy every hour", to "die daily". To deny it must be the result of "evil company" (which as even the heathen poet Menander says "corrupt good manners"), and of the lack of the knowledge of God—and such denial will be more than a doctrinal error, it will be fatal to Christian life and righteousness.

The fact is certain, but *how* will it be? Of what sort will be the Resurrection body? To answer this St. Paul quotes the analogy of growth from the seed. The seed dies, as The nature of the Resurrection body. the very condition of new life, and that which springs from it is both the same and different.

"So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual *body*" (1 Cor. xv. 42-44).

Thus the Resurrection body will be the true body of the individual, just as the growth from the seed and the offspring of animals preserve the identity of species, and as the heavenly bodies retain their own proper 'glory' and do not pass into that of another. But it will be different, because spiritualised and heavenly, through the power of Christ the Second Adam, who is Himself a "life-giving spirit". In this sense the Greeks were right: "flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God, neither doth corruption inherit incorruption".

A further question arises: what of those who are still living on earth in their natural bodies when Christ comes again? The change in their case will be the same, but it will be instantaneous: "Behold, I tell you a mystery¹: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality" (Cor. xv. 51-53). The Conquest of Death.

¹ *I.e.* a truth revealed to Christians, but hidden from and incomprehensible to the world.

Then follows the triumphant conclusion, foreshadowed in the prophets of old. "Death is swallowed up in victory" (Is. xxv. 8). "O death, where is thy sting! O death, where is thy victory!" (Hos. xiii. 14).¹ The victory over death is the corollary of the victory over sin, and this has been won by Jesus Christ. And His victory is the mainspring of the Christian life. "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. xv. 58).

One practical question remains to be settled; apparently raised by the Corinthians themselves. How is the collection of alms which the Apostle had ordered for the relief of the poor Christians of Jerusalem to be conducted? The weekly Sunday, already the recognised Christian holy day, would provide the opportunity. "Upon the first day of the week let each one of you lay by him in store, as he may prosper, that no collections be made when I come. And when I arrive, whomsoever ye shall approve by letters, them will I send to carry your bounty unto Jerusalem" (1 Cor. xvi. 2, 3).

The remainder of the epistle is taken up with personal matters. The Apostle hopes when he leaves Ephesus to visit Corinth on his way to or from Macedonia, and to spend the winter there. But he proposes to stay at Ephesus till Pentecost, where there is a great opportunity, and also great opposition. Timothy might visit them earlier: if so, he was not to be 'despised', but treated with honour and consideration. Apollos cannot come as yet, though St. Paul desired it. The family of Stephanas, "the firstfruits of Achaia" (the first converted to Christ) is to be treated with respect, as having evidently a natural leadership. The Corinthians are thanked for sending the deputation—Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus. Salutations are sent from Ephesus, especially from Aquila, Priscilla, and the Apostle himself. He concludes the epistle with a "salutation" from himself, in his own handwriting, but characteristically puts his Master in the first place. It is love for Him that he seeks rather than for himself—for Christ who is the final judge of men, the author of

¹ A translation apparently by St. Paul himself, but representing the sense of the Hebrew better than A.V.

all grace, the fount of all Christian love. "If any man loveth not the Lord, let him be anathema.¹ Maranatha.² The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you. My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen."

¹ Anathema = accursed.

² Maranatha is a separate statement = "The Lord cometh".

CHAPTER X

EPHESUS : SECOND EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS

I saw Thee once, and nought discerned
For stranger to admire ;
A serious aspect, but it burned
With no unearthly fire.

I saw once more, and awe-struck gazed
On face, and form, and air :
God's living glory round Thee blazed—
A Saint—a Saint was there !

J. H. NEWMAN.

ST. PAUL had promised the Corinthians to visit them shortly, in the course of a proposed tour through Macedonia and Achaia ; after which he intended to visit Jerusalem to carry the contributions offered by the Gentile Churches. But he had a further ambition : “ After I have been there, I must also see Rome ”. The Christians of the great imperial capital were already famous for their faith and devotion, and the Apostle was eager to know and encourage them. Ephesus, however, still seemed to claim him, so he sent Timothy and Erastus as his fore-runners into Macedonia, intending them to go on thence to Corinth. Whether they ever reached Corinth is uncertain.

But St. Paul's stay in Ephesus came to an unexpected end. A heathen riot, graphically described in Acts xix., endangered his life, and the lives of his friends. It was engineered by one Demetrius, a silversmith, who was prominent in the trade of making silver “ shrines ” of the goddess Artemis. The temple and worship of Artemis were among the wonders of the ancient world, and attracted vast numbers of devotees and sightseers. These were accustomed to buy as mementoes of their visit little

silver images of the goddess, enclosed in a casket or cell, intended to represent her shrine. The progress of the Gospel threatened the trade in these idolatrous emblems and alarmed Demetrius. He assembled his fellow-craftsmen and all who were financially interested, and stirred them to fury by pointing out that both their income and the glory of their city were in danger if such a preposterous doctrine was tolerated as that "they be no gods that are made with hands". They rushed madly about the streets, crying out "Great Artemis of the Ephesians!" and speedily stirred up a general riot, which centred in the theatre, a vast open-air excavation, which would hold many thousands. Most of the mob did not know in the least what they had assembled for, but they joined in the cry of "Great Artemis!" The followers of Demetrius had dragged with them to the theatre two Macedonian companions of St. Paul, Gaius and Aristarchus, who were in danger of their lives. St. Paul himself, with characteristic courage, was eager to face the howling mob, but he had friends among the magistrates, or 'Asiarchs', who sent him an urgent message not to risk himself in the theatre. The Jews, fearing apparently that the rage of the mob might be directed against themselves as well-known opponents of idolatry, attempted to put up a spokesman, one Alexander, in the theatre to defend them. But Alexander could only gesticulate; he was refused a hearing as soon as they saw he was a Jew; and for two hours the tumult went on, amid ceaseless cries of "Great Artemis of the Ephesians!"

At last the "town-clerk" or secretary of the "Ecclesia" succeeded by an adroit speech in quieting and dispersing the rioters. He flattered their vanity by reminding them that the greatness of Artemis and her image that had fallen down from Zeus, and consequently the greatness of Ephesus, her "temple-keeper", were matters of world-wide repute, and there was no need to be excited on that score. Moreover there was no charge either of temple-robbery or of blasphemy against Gaius and Aristarchus. And if Demetrius and his friends had any real grievance against them, it ought to be decided by the regular forms of law: "the courts are open and there are proconsuls". In conclusion he reminded them that such a riotous and causeless gathering might easily bring them under the displeasure of Rome.

The immediate peril was over, but it might break out again at any moment. It was clear that St. Paul's life was not safe in Ephesus. He assembled the Church, delivered a farewell address, and departed for Macedonia. It must have been one of the bitterest moments of his life, coming upon him as it did after such amazing successes, and at a time when both Corinth and Galatia must have been causing him heartfelt anxiety.

He made his way to Troas, hoping there to find his friend and fellow-worker Titus with better news from Corinth. Titus was not there, but joined the Apostle at Philippi, bearing tidings of the good effect of the recent letter, and the repentance of the Corinthians. This must have been therefore the place and the moment of the Second Epistle to that Church.¹

This is the most personal and in some ways the most attractive of all St. Paul's letters. He had been moved to the depths not merely by the party-spirit and immorality and grave errors of the Corinthian Church, but also by the personal attacks of his opponents on his own authority as an Apostle. This epistle is a revelation of himself; it has well been called his *apologia pro vita sua*.

The epistle begins with an outburst of thankfulness for the 'comfort' which has succeeded to the Apostle's deep sorrow. This sorrow had been no light thing: "For we would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning our affliction which befell *us* in Asia, that we were weighed down exceedingly, beyond our power, insomuch that we despaired even of life: yea, we ourselves have had the answer of death within ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in

¹ This is, on the surface, the simplest and the most usual explanation of the course of the controversy between St. Paul and the Corinthians. But a closer study of 2 Cor. reveals many difficulties. (See Lake, *The Earlier Epistles of St. Paul*, pp. 144-175.) Hence it is suggested that St. Paul himself, shortly after the despatch of 1 Cor., visited Corinth a second time. He was unsuccessful in bringing the Corinthians to a better mind, and returned to Ephesus in deep sorrow and distress. He then wrote a very severe letter to them, threatening a third visit, of which it has been conjectured that 2 Cor. x.-xiii. is really a part. This was sent by Titus, and had a remarkable effect. Titus on his return to meet St. Paul at Troas reported favourably, and the latter then indited 2 Cor. i.-ix. in a burst of thankfulness and joy. An unrecorded visit to Corinth seems almost necessitated by 2 Cor. xii. 14 and xiii. 1. If the above hypothesis is not accepted, this visit may be placed during the earlier part of the stay at Ephesus, and *before* 1 Cor. was written.

God which raiseth the dead : who delivered us out of so great a death, and will deliver" (2 Cor. i. 8-10). "For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye should be made sorry, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you" (*ibid.* ii. 4).

And not in Ephesus or Asia only, but all the way to Macedonia, until the actual coming of Titus, this load of suffering had oppressed the heart of St. Paul. "Our flesh", he says, "had no relief, but we were afflicted on every side; without were fightings, within were fears" (2 Cor. vii. 5). He could not even take advantage of an open door of opportunity for preaching at Troas. "I had no relief for my spirit." But why, then, had he not visited Corinth again, as he apparently had purposed? He assures them that it was no fickleness on his part, "our word toward you is not 'yea' and 'nay'". Such conduct would be inconsistent with the certainties of the very Gospel he preached: "For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, *even* by me and Silvanus and Timothy, was not yea and nay, but in him is yea. For how many soever be the promises of God, in him is the yea: wherefore also through him is the Amen, unto the glory of God through us" (2 Cor. i. 19, 20).

No, it was in love that he had postponed his visit; it was to spare them, lest he should find their conduct still unimproved, and be compelled to have the sorrow of reproving them in person.

But now the news had come that the whole attitude of the Corinthians was changed. They were eager to clear themselves from complicity in the sin of the chief offender; and Penitence St. Paul even has to intercede for him that he may at Corinth. now be forgiven, "lest by any means such a one should be swallowed up with his overmuch sorrow". The Corinthians had turned with revulsion of feeling towards St. Paul himself, their spiritual father. Above all there was a real feeling of penitence, not merely sorrow for the past, but resolution to amend. This is what St. Paul calls "godly sorrow", and which he finely contrasts with "the sorrow of the world":

"Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye were made sorry unto repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly sort, that ye might suffer loss by us in nothing. For godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation, a *repentance* which

bringeth no regret : but the sorrow of the world worketh death. For behold, this selfsame thing, that ye were made sorry after a godly sort, what earnest care it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what longing, yea, what zeal, yea, what avenging ! In everything ye approved yourselves to be pure in the matter ” (vii. 9-11).

The most remarkable passage in the earlier part of the epistle is ii. 14-vi. 10, which is largely concerned with the question of

The Ministry of the new Covenant. St. Paul's own ministry and that of his colleagues, and especially with its *sincerity*. Sincerity, indeed, is the keynote of the whole—the transparent honesty of those whose whole life is devoted to the fulfilment of a task set by God Himself, and lived in the continual contemplation of God's glory and love.¹

Such a ministry needs no human praise or recommendation. Its course is a triumphal progress in Christ. Its influence is like the all-pervading perfume of incense, even though it has opposite effects on those who experience it. “ For we are a sweet savour of Christ unto God, in them that are being saved, and in them that are perishing ; to the one a savour from death unto death ; to the other a savour from life unto life ” (2 Cor. ii. 15, 16).

Nor do the apostles need “ epistles of commendation ” (such as were sent from one Christian congregation to another, commending individuals). The souls of their converts are an epistle, written by Christ Himself, written in the heart, not with ink, but with “ the Spirit of the living God ”—such an epistle is “ known and read of all men ”.

Already he has asked the question which every minister of Christ must re-echo, “ Who is sufficient for those things ? ” He now answers it with the certainty of faith. “ And such confidence have we through Christ to God-ward : not that we are sufficient of ourselves, to account anything as from ourselves ; but our sufficiency is from God ; who also made us sufficient as ministers of a new covenant ” (2 Cor. iii. 4, 6).

¹ This ‘ new covenant ’ means a new relationship between God and man. It is foretold and described by Jeremiah. Our Lord inaugurated it at the Last Supper. It is the subject of Hebrews viii.-ix. It may also be noted that the Epistle to the Hebrews is more like 2 Cor. than any other New Testament writing. Possibly the influence of St. Luke is to be seen in both. He was probably at Philippi at this time.

This new covenant is contrasted with the old, of which Moses was the mediator, as infinitely more glorious—as being of the Spirit, instead of the mere letter, ‘written, and engraven in stones’; as giving life, rather than threatening death; as permanent, while the old passed away; as marked by liberty and full vision—in contrast with the blindness and lack of illumination of the Jew. The veil which Moses put on his face to hide the passing away of the supernatural brightness is still upon the heart of the Jew, while his scriptures are being read. How different is the atmosphere of the Christian Church: “We all, with unveiled face reflecting as a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit”.

Hence the characteristic of the minister of the new Covenant is openness and sincerity: “For we are not as the many, corrupting the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God, speak we in Christ” (2 Cor. ii. 17). “Therefore seeing we have this ministry, even as we obtained mercy, we faint not: but we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by the manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.” “For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord: and ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake” (*ibid.* iv. 1, 2, 5).

In strange contradiction, at first sight, to claims so exalted, privileges so high, comes in the thought of what the world could only see in the apostles: bodily infirmity, mental distress, constant suffering, and persecution. But these things are the very condition of success; they unite the minister of Christ with the Passion, and therefore with the Resurrection of the Lord.

“But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the exceeding greatness of the power may be of God, and not from ourselves; *we are* pressed on every side, yet not straitened; perplexed, yet not unto despair; pursued, yet not forsaken; smitten down, yet not destroyed; always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our body. For we which live are alway delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh.

The suffer-
ings and
the hopes
of the
Ministry.

Wherefore we faint not; but though our outward man is decaying, yet our inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is for the moment, worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Cor. iv. 7-11; 16-18).

The eternal world is the constant object of the Christian's vision. But he has more to look forward to than the mere "mystic". Death will mean more than the emancipation of the soul. There is a new and more wonderful body awaiting him in the resurrection life. That life will not be the nakedness of a disembodied spirit, but the putting on of a nobler frame (Cf. Browning, *Easter Day*, xxvi.).

"For we know that if the earthly house of our tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens. For verily in this we groan, longing to be clothed upon with our habitation which is from heaven: if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For indeed we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened; not for that we would be unclothed, but that we would be clothed upon, that what is mortal may be swallowed up of life" (2 Cor. v. 1-4).

Thus the minister of Christ lives for another life than this; and yet his strenuousness and sincerity in this present life are the very condition of attaining his hope. For so great a hope necessarily involves the fear of missing it. Judgment is inevitable. "Wherefore also we make it our aim, whether at home or absent, to be well-pleasing unto him. For we must all be made manifest before the judgement-seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things *done* in the body, according to what he hath done, whether *it be good or bad*" (2 Cor. v. 9, 10).

The minister of Christ has therefore two great motives to sincerity: 'the fear of the Lord' and the 'love of Christ'. The latter is the impelling power of a new life, in which all values are changed. Our attitude towards our fellow-men, nay, our knowledge of Christ Himself, are fundamentally different from the ordinary human view: "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that one

died for all, therefore all died ; and he died for all, that they which live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto him who for their sakes died and rose again. Wherefore we henceforth know no man after the flesh : even though we have known Christ after the flesh,¹ yet now we know *him* so no more. Wherefore if any man is in Christ, *he is* a new creature : the old things are passed away ; behold, they are become new " (2 Cor. v. 14-17).

Hence the office of the minister of Christ's Gospel is nothing less than to reconcile man to God through Christ. It is essentially *priestly*. It is based upon sacrifice—the sin-offering which Christ the sinless has offered to atone for human sin : " Him who knew no sin he made to *be* sin on our behalf ; that we might become the righteousness of God in him " (*ib.* 21).

All the sufferings and the contradictions of the ministerial life are justified. They are the very means by which its work is to be accomplished. So the Apostle rises to his splendid and impassioned climax : " In everything commending ourselves, as ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings ; in pureness, in knowledge, in longsuffering, in kindness, in the Holy Ghost, in love unfeigned, in the word of truth, in the power of God ; by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, by glory and dishonour, by evil report and good report ; as deceivers, and *yet* true ; as unknown, and *yet* well known ; as dying, and behold, we live ; as chastened, and not killed ; as sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing ; as poor, yet making many rich ; as having nothing, and *yet* possessing all things " (2 Cor. vi. 4-10).

A practical conclusion follows ; the Corinthians must not " be unequally yoked with unbelievers ". They must realise the essential *separation* which this new life in Christ involves. They must neither marry heathen wives and husbands, nor associate with the heathen in such way as to ignore the gulf between the

¹ " After the flesh ", *i.e.* as the unbelievers may in a superficial way know Christ by history or tradition or the common talk of men, or even by theology. St. Paul does not mean to discredit these sources of knowledge, but he means that they are transcended and swallowed up in that higher spiritual knowledge by which the Christian knows Christ as a living personal Saviour with whom he is in union. So, too, our ordinary knowledge of our fellow-men does not disappear, but gives place to the knowledge of them as souls needing Christ.

Church and the world. "What agreement hath a temple of God with idols?" The old separation of Israel from the Gentiles must be carried out in a resolute refusal to be mixed up with the sins of the heathen world; "let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God". And once again he appeals to his own sincerity of purpose, "Open your hearts to us: we wronged no man, we corrupted no man: we took advantage of no man".

He now proceeds (viii.-ix.) to speak of a matter which was evidently close to his heart: the duty of almsgiving, and especially that offering which he desired the Gentile converts to make towards the relief of the poor in Jerusalem. The Churches of Macedonia, out of "deep poverty", had already shewn themselves most liberal. Corinth, too, had made a beginning: let it be now completed. It will be a real imitation of Christ: "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor" (viii. 9).

The Apostle intends to send Titus again to receive this completed offering, and with him an unnamed brother, "whose praise", he says, "in the Gospel is spread through all the Churches", perhaps St. Luke. It is all-important that this offering should be a willing one, given sincerely according to each man's means: "God loveth a cheerful giver". Such gifts will bring abundant blessings on the Corinthians themselves, and bind together in thanksgiving and intercession both those who give and those who receive. "Thanks be to God", he concludes, "for his unspeakable gift". The gift of alms suggests that highest gift which prompts and justifies it, the gift of salvation in Christ.

The second part of the epistle from chapter x. onwards differs considerably in tone from the previous part. It is severer, and St. Paul's appears to be directed largely against those who were as yet impenitent, and especially against various enemies. agitators, probably Judaizers, who were sneering at the Apostle and belittling his authority and office. If we assume that these chapters really form part of 2 Cor. it must be supposed that part only of the Corinthians had come to a better mind and that there was still a strong opposition, as yet

unreconciled. Throughout, the Apostle's tone is earnest and impassioned, shewing both a tender affection for his converts, and a sensitiveness of soul which felt most deeply the insults and ingratitude which were being poured upon him in his absence. There is a conflict going on between St. Paul's humility and self-effacement ; and his sense of what is due not to himself, but his office and Divine authority.

His opponents ignore this authority, and are speaking and thinking of him "according to the flesh", sneering at his infirmities, and criticising his actions from the merely personal and human point of view. "His letters", they say, "are weighty and strong ; but his bodily presence is weak and his speech is of no account".

There is no uncertain sound about St. Paul's reply. He is conscious of a power behind and within him which transcends all personal weakness. "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh (for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but mighty before God to the casting down of strongholds) ; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God, and bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ ; and being in readiness to avenge all disobedience, when your obedience shall be fulfilled" (2 Cor. x. 3-6).

And as to the taunt about the difference between his letters and himself, his answer is equally straight : "Let such a one reckon this, that, what we are in word by letters when we are absent, such *are we* also in deed when we are present" (*ib.* v. 11).

As for his opponents, they are doing the work of Satan himself, when he tempted Eve ! They are "false apostles, deceitful workers, fashioning themselves into the apostles of Christ", just as Satan is capable of transforming himself outwardly into "an angel of light".

Even from a human point of view, as compared with his opponents, St. Paul feels that he has a right to claim authority. Though in saying it, he feels "foolish" and a boaster, yet speak he must. The words are reluctantly dragged out of him, yet who could keep silent about such a record as this : "Are they Hebrews ? so am I. Are they Israel-
ites ? so am I. Are they the seed of Abraham ? so am I. Are

The Glory
of in-
firmities.

they ministers of Christ ? (I speak as one beside himself) I more ; in labours more abundantly, in prisons more abundantly, in stripes above measure, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty *stripes* save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day have I been in the deep ; *in* journeyings often, *in* perils of rivers, *in* perils of robbers, *in* perils from *my* countrymen, *in* perils from the Gentiles, *in* perils in the city, *in* perils in the wilderness, *in* perils in the sea, *in* perils among false brethren ; *in* labour and travail, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, there is that which presseth upon me daily, anxiety for all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak ? who is made to stumble, and I burn not ? ” (1 Cor. xi. 21-29).

[This summary of St. Paul's sufferings up to the year 54 only is enough to shew how comparatively scanty and selected the narrative of Acts must be.]

He might tell them too of “ a man in Christ ”, he shrinks from saying it is himself, who has been actually admitted into the world of the unseen, “ the third heaven ”, “ Paradise ”, and heard unspeakable communications from God Himself (see above, p. 15). But most characteristically he checks himself here, and turns upon his opponents their own weapons. They had used his infirmities to discredit his authority. It is these infirmities which are the very ground of his glory ; his very credentials as an Apostle. Even that mysterious bodily (p. 26) affliction, “ the thorn (or ‘ stake ’) in the flesh ”, “ the messenger of Satan to buffet me ” (which doubtless had been held up to scorn by his adversaries), even *that* for whose removal he had thrice besought the Lord Jesus Himself—yes, even *that* is a ground of glorying—for has it not been said of *that*, “ my grace is sufficient for thee, for my power is made perfect in weakness ? ”

Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my weaknesses, that the strength of Christ may rest upon me. “ Wherefore I take pleasure in weaknesses, in injuries, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake : for when I am weak, then am I strong ” (2 Cor. xii. 9, 10).

The very names of these Corinthian adversaries have perished. Their pettiness and spite are only remembered because they were

involuntarily the means of giving to the Church this imperishable and most human portrait of St. Paul the *man*, drawn by his own hand.

The rest of the letter shews again the real love and disinterestedness which underlie this outburst. The question at issue is far from being merely personal. The Apostle The love
of souls. desires neither gain nor praise, nor even love in return.

"I seek not yours, but you : for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children. And I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls. If I love you more abundantly, am I loved the less ? " (2 Cor. xii. 14, 15).

All that he craves is the building up and perfecting in Christ of those whom he himself has led to Christ. The only humiliation he dreads is to find them sinful and impenitent, and to be compelled to rebuke them sharply. "For I fear, lest by any means, when I come, I should find you not such as I would, and should myself be found of you such as ye would not ; lest by any means *there should be* strife, jealousy, wraths, factions, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults ; lest, when I come again, my God should humble me before you, and I should mourn for many of them that have sinned heretofore, and repented not " (*ib.* 20, 21).

Nevertheless, when he pays them his third visit he will not shrink from using severity, if it is needed. They will find that as he shares the weakness and sufferings of the Crucified, so, too, he shares in His power. But (like Moses of old) he is willing himself if it were possible to be "reprobate" (rejected by Christ), if only his converts' salvation is assured. He bids the Corinthians test their own conduct. "Try your own selves whether ye be in the faith : prove your own selves." Once more an appeal to sincerity : "We can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth".

The epistle ends with the old note of affection : "Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfected ; be comforted ; be of the same mind ; live in peace : and the God of love and peace shall be with you. Salute one another with a holy kiss.

"All the saints salute you.

"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all " (2 Cor. xiii. 11-14).

The last verse shews incidentally how inherent in St. Paul's thought is the doctrine of the Trinity, though not formally stated. It is a truth that flows inevitably out of the belief in the Incarnation. That new power of "grace" which has come into human life through the Lordship of Christ implies both the originating love of the Father (cf. St. John iii. 16), and the realisation of that love in the fellowship of the Church, through the indwelling Holy Spirit.

CHAPTER XI

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS

Chosen vessel ; earth-transcending,
Past all mortal bound ascending,
Where man's reasonings vainly soar ;
Rapt above the angel orders,
Mysteries taught in heaven's borders,
Well thou learn'dst the secret lore.

From this vessel richly furnished,
So beloved, so purely burnished,
Christ, on us Thy blessings rain :
By Thy prayer from sin relieve us,
In Thy realm for aye receive us,
Purified from dross and stain.

AFTER visiting the churches of Macedonia, and giving them "much exhortation" (Acts xx. 2), St. Paul proceeded south into Greece. Here he made a stay of three months, At Corinth apparently at Corinth, entertained by Gaius, one of his ^{again} early converts. The bitter controversies and antagonisms seem to have been laid to rest, and in addition to his usual work of prayer, preaching, and personal interviews, he found time to dictate to his secretary Tertius, and to send off the deepest and most elaborately reasoned of all his letters, the Epistle to the Romans.¹

¹ The weight of MS. authority, internal probability, and universal tradition are all in favour of the correctness of this title to the Epistle. There are indeed traces of its being used as an encyclical to various churches. More than one ending is found. Cf. xi. 36, xv. 13 and 33, xvi. 20. And in one MS. of the 9th century the word 'Rome' is omitted in the first chapter, an omission which can be traced back as far as Origen. But it is much more probable that the omission is due to some later use of the Epistle ; and it can scarcely override the general unanimity of the earlier MSS. in favour of Rome. See on the whole problem, and the question of the existence of the "shorter recension", omitting the last two chapters of the Epistle, Lake, pp. 324-370.

This was the first, and with the exception of the Epistle to the Colossians, the only occasion on which the Apostle addressed a Christian community which was personally unknown to him, and in whose conversion he had taken no direct part. It was contrary to his usual custom. He did not wish to interfere in the labours of others, or build upon another man's foundation. At Rome, however, he would not apparently be in danger of any such collision. The foundation of the Roman Church is wrapped in the greatest obscurity. It is impossible to say that it was or was not the work of any one apostle or missionary. The Church may have grown up secretly by the settlement of individual Christians and their families in the capital; and it may at this time have been without any definite organisation. The very general and very early tradition of the connection of St. Peter with the Roman Church must certainly have some foundation, but it is impossible to harmonise with the N.T. the legend that he spent there a twenty-five years' episcopate, commencing with his escape from Jerusalem (Acts xii.). That St. Peter suffered martyrdom in Rome is practically certain; that he paid some early visit or visits to Rome is not improbable. Apparently his first Epistle was written from Rome, which he calls "Babylon" (1 St. Peter v. 13). But it seems hardly probable that he could have been there at the time when St. Paul wrote his epistle.

For some time, as we have seen, to visit Rome had been an earnest wish of St. Paul. Not only was there the natural attraction of the great world-centre to one of his grand ideals and imperial outlook. He had also heard much of the steadfastness and devotion of the Roman Christians themselves. It must not be forgotten that his two intimate fellow-workers at Ephesus, Aquila and Priscilla, had come from Rome; and they had now apparently returned there. Unable as yet to visit Rome (though destined to go there before long as a prisoner), he was led to write this great epistle, not merely for greeting and encouragement, but as his most full and definite doctrinal statement of the meaning of the Gospel of Christ. It is not a little remarkable in view of the later history of Christendom that it should have been the Roman Church which was thus selected as the special recipient and guardian of the Pauline 'gospel'.

His introduction of himself, more formal than usual, seems to intimate the importance of the letter : " Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called *to be* an apostle, separated unto the ^{The Gospel} gospel of God ". In his opening greetings, he speaks ^{of Christ.} thankfully of the faith of the Romans, which, he says, " is spoken of throughout the world ". He constantly prays for them ; and he longs to see them in order that he may " impart to them some spiritual gift ", and may himself have the comfort also of their faith. He desires to have some " fruit ", some share in their spiritual progress, " even as in the rest of the Gentiles ". They have a part in that universal obligation which he feels to be laid upon him to declare the Gospel to all.

" I am debtor both to Greeks and to Barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you also that are in Rome " (Rom. i. 14, 15).

What, then, is this Gospel ? It is in the first instance the witness to historical facts, the O.T. revelation, the Incarnation, and the Resurrection of Christ, the apostolic call to all nations of the world. It is " the gospel of God, which he promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures, concerning his Son, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, who was declared *to be* the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness,¹ by the resurrection of the dead ; *even* Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we received grace and apostleship, unto obedience of faith among all the nations, for his name's sake : among whom are ye also, called *to be* Jesus Christ's " (*ib.* i. 2-6).

Of this ' Gospel ' he is ' not ashamed ', for it is " the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth, to the Jew first and also to the Greek ". For what is the inner meaning of the Gospel ? It is the revelation to human faith of " the righteousness of God ".

This, then, is the great subject of the epistle, God's righteousness ; how it is vindicated by the Gospel ; how it may be attained by a world lost in wickedness. It was natural that this aspect of Christianity should be the most prominent ^{God's} ^{Righteous-} to a Jew, whose reading of the history and education ^{ness.} of God's people in the Old Testament had shown him, first, the

¹ By this is apparently meant our Lord's Divine nature, in contrast with " the flesh " (v. 3), His human nature.

moral nature of the one true God, in contrast with all the immoral or non-moral heathen religions ; secondly, that man's greatest need, which God alone could supply, was also moral ; and thirdly, that no external ordinances in themselves could attain this end—for it needed, as the Prophets constantly taught, a complete change of man's attitude towards God : “ the righteous shall live by faith ”.

He begins with a review of the moral condition of the heathen world, which he draws in the darkest colours ; “ the wrath of God is revealed from heaven ” against it. The principal cause of this moral failure he finds in treachery to conscience. Natural religion, “ that which may be known of God ”, by reason and conscience, has been wilfully rejected ; and the result is a degradation of the whole conception of God, and general idolatry.

“ For the invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, *even* his everlasting power and divinity ; that they may be without excuse : because that, knowing God, they glorified him not as God, neither gave thanks ; but became vain in their reasonings, and their senseless heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of an image of corruptible man, and of birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things ” (Rom. i. 20-23).

This worshipping “ of the creature rather than the creator ” brought as its natural sequence universal moral depravity.

“ And even as they refused to have God in *their* knowledge, God gave them up unto a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not fitting ; being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness ; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malignity ; whisperers, backbiters, hateful to God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, unmerciful : who, knowing the ordinance of God, that they which practise such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but also consent with them that practise them ” (*ib.* 28-32).

From this gloomy picture of the Gentile world, he turns

sharply upon the censorious and self-righteous Jew. Is he any better? No! the Law of which he is so proud will be his own condemnation. "There is no respect of persons with God." God's punishments and rewards will be meted out, not according to national privileges, but just in a proportion as a man, whether Jew or Gentile, has been true to conscience and to what he knows of God. The Jew has been as faithless to revelation as the heathen to the light of natural religion.

"But if thou bearest the name of a Jew, and retest upon the law, and gloriest in God, and knowest his will, and approvest the things that are excellent, being instructed out of the law, and are confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them that are in darkness, a corrector of the foolish, a teacher of babes, having in the law the form of knowledge and of the truth; thou therefore that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou rob temples? thou who gloriest in the law, through thy transgression of the law dishonourest thou God? For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you, even as it is written" (Rom. ii. 17-24).

Thus, in spite of the "oracles of God", which had been committed to them, in spite of the external observance of the Law, the Jew is in just as evil a case as the Gentile. All alike are "under sin": "all the world is guilty before God".

But here comes in the stupendous message of the Gospel, the righteousness of God is revealed in Jesus Christ, and especially in that which above all else was a stumbling-block to the Jew—His Death on the Cross. In this we see both the judgment of man's sin, and the very means by which man, Gentile and Jew alike, may be justified—attain, in God's sight, to righteousness. And the one condition for all alike is *faith*.

Justifica-
tion by
Faith.

"Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God set forth to be a propitiation, through faith, by his blood, to show his righteousness, because of the passing over of the sins done aforetime, in the forbearance

of God ;¹ for the shewing, *I say*, of his righteousness at this present season : that he might himself be just, and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus ” (Rom. iii. 24-26).

At once the difficulty arises. Does not such a view of universal guilt, and the universal efficacy of faith, empty of all meaning
 The Old Testament the record of faith. the teaching of the Old Testament as to the call of the Jews and the excellency of the Law ? Far from it. Just before, the Apostle had asserted that this “ righteousness of God apart from the law ” had been “ witnessed by the law and the prophets ”. He now proceeds, much as in the Epistle to the Galatians, to draw out the inner meaning of the Old Testament, and shew that even there faith rather than works (by ‘ works ’ he does not mean good works, as we understand them, but the fulfilling of a code of religious observances) is recognised as that by which man is justified. “ David ” (Ps. xxxii.) had spoken of the blessedness of forgiveness—a forgiveness which could not be claimed as a right, even by the circumcised Jew, but was given by the Divine mercy alone. And even of Abraham, the recipient of the covenant of circumcision, it was said that his “ faith was reckoned to him for righteousness ”, and this even before he was circumcised, and before the Law was given. Hence the true children of Abraham are those who share his faith in God, “ who quickeneth the dead and calleth those things that are not as though they were ”. And this great principle of faith which runs through the Old Testament history has found its completion in the faith by which Christians believe on Him “ who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered up for our trespasses, and was raised for our justification ”.

“ Being therefore justified by faith let us have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ ”. The great Christian climax of the argument has been reached—atonement, reconciliation of God and man. As the writer proceeds, his theology glows with devotion, with that personal gratitude and love towards the Lord which is the mainspring of St. Paul’s new life.

“ For while we were yet weak, in due season Christ died for

¹ *I.e.* God might appear to be unrighteous because, in the past, sins had not been punished to the full. But God forbore to punish, because by the death of His only Son, He willed to make a full satisfaction for sin.

the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die : for peradventure for the good man some one would even dare to die. But God commended his own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, shall we be saved from the wrath of *God* through him. For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life ; and not only so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation ” (vv. 6-11).

The essential “righteousness” of the atonement is further shewn by a parallel between the first and second Adam (cf. 1 Cor. xv. 45, p. 97). The human race have all been involved in the sin and death which were the result of Adam’s transgression. But by the free gift of God, humanity has taken a new beginning and found a new head in Christ. “For as through the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the one shall the many be made righteous ” (*ib.* 19).

The kingdom of death is to the Christian overthrown already ; grace “reigns through righteousness unto eternal life”.

The writer passes here from the sense in which he has hitherto spoken of justification, *i.e.* of forgiveness or acquittal, to the practical effect of this righteousness in the life of the Christian. St. Paul had learned already (see p. 74) how perilously his teaching might be misinterpreted. Practical
righteous-
ness. It might be plausibly argued that if justification was given freely without reference to “the works of the law”, it would not matter how a man lived. It was conceivable even that a perverse logic might suggest that the more a man sinned, the more grace he would win !

“Away with such a thought ! We who died to sin, how shall we any longer live therein ?” The Apostle points to the plain fact of baptism, and all that it necessarily implies. Baptism is a real sharing in the death of Christ. We are buried with Christ as the water flows over our head. And therefore in baptism we rise again with Him “to newness of life”. We are set free from the dominion of sin ; let us realise this liberty by living even now in this dying body a resurrection life.

“Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey the lusts thereof: neither present your members unto sin *as* instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves unto God, as alive from the dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness unto God” (Rom. vi. 12, 13).

The past with its old slavery to uncleanness and iniquity is done with. A glorious prospect of liberty and life opens before the baptized: instead of those “wages” of death, which were all that the old life of sin had to look forward to, he has his “fruit unto sanctification”, and the end, not “wages”, but a “gift of God”, “everlasting life”.

A difficult passage follows (vii.) in which St. Paul explains in what sense a Christian is not only ‘dead’ to his past life of **The Law** sin, but also ‘dead to the law’. The Law is viewed **cannot** as a scheme of external ordinances, which could only **give right-** as a scheme of external ordinances, which could only **eousness.** warn men against sin, and convict them of sin, or even, by the perversity of human nature, suggest sin to them. To all this Christians are dead, but (like a woman who on the death of her husband may lawfully marry another) they have been united to the risen, living Christ. *Their* morality is a living principle of holiness, not the mere conformity to an external rule.

Let it not be thought, however, that the Law is being disparaged. It is “holy, righteous and good”. But its effect on the natural man is only to awaken a desperate moral struggle—conscience urges to obedience, natural instincts and desires to rebellion. This struggle is described in remarkable language—in which we cannot fail to trace the memory of the writer’s own spiritual conflicts (p. 8). Desire is represented as triumphing over conscience—the “law of sin in my members” brings me into captivity, although my “mind” may consent to the law of God. “For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me, but to do that which is good *is* not. For the good which I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I practise” (Rom. vii. 18, 19). With tempted and vanquished humanity, he cries out, “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me out of the body of this death?” The answer springs to his lips in a triumphal ejaculation: “I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord”.

This Name of power leads directly to the teaching of chapter viii., the most splendid and impassioned passage in St. Paul's writings, in which we see him, not only as a teacher speaking from his own deep spiritual experience, but as a prophet and an inspired mystic. It is a passage that stands supreme in the literature of the soul. It is perhaps the nearest that Paul ever attained to speak to men those "unspeakable words" which he heard in "the third heaven" (p. 16). The passage requires and deserves the closest and most reverent study; no summaries or extracts can do it justice.

The new
life in the
Spirit.

Not long before, he had written to the Corinthians (2 Cor. v. 17) of that passing away of old things and the 'new creation' which the Christian even in this present life has entered into. Now in more detail he writes of this new life of those "who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit". To them is "no condemnation". They are in a state of forgiveness and peace. Theirs is true freedom, for they are set free from "the law of sin and death". They are able to fulfil that righteousness which the Law enjoined, but which it had no strength to enable men to perform. They are no longer enemies, but friends and children of God. God has adopted them, so that they are bold to address Him, in the very words of Christ, in the Lord's Prayer, 'Abba, Father'. "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with *him*, that we may be also glorified with him" (viii. 17). Something of this had been written already to the Galatians (p. 73), but the special feature of the present passage is its insistence on the work of the Holy Spirit, the "Spirit of Christ". He is the indwelling principle and power of this new life in the Christian. He is the guide of life, and the inward personal witness of Divine sonship. "The Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit that we are children of God." His presence within us is the very means by which we shall be raised from the dead to eternal glory; "if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you, he that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies through his Spirit that dwelleth in you" (ib. 11). Here the Christian finds both the constraining obligation and the power for the life of holiness. "We are debtors not to the flesh to live

after the flesh—if by the Spirit ye mortify the deeds of the body ye shall live.”

Mortification, sharing the sufferings of Christ, is indeed the lot of the Christian here, but consider his consolations. Here the Apostle rises to his grandest utterances. In burning words of mystery he sketches a philosophy of the universe. This liberty, this Divine fellowship and sonship, which Christians even now enjoy, are the key to all the process of the ages, even to the problem of pain and vanity and failure under which all creation is groaning, and in which even Christians have still to bear their part.

“For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us-ward. For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to vanity, not of its own will, but by reason of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only so, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for *our* adoption, *to wit*, the redemption of our body” (Rom. viii. 18-23).

This “riddle of the painful earth”, this “burden of the mystery”, . . . “the heavy and the weary weight of all this unintelligible world” is big with hope and promise. The hidden lives of Christians are leading on to the great unveiling and consummation, the manifestation of the sons of God, the perfected Church, the redemption and deliverance even of Nature herself. But there are other more immediate consolations for the suffering Christian.

He has the present help of the Holy Spirit in prayer. Even our inarticulate desires and aspirations, when we do not know what to pray for, are made His own by the Spirit who knows all hearts. He Himself in us “maketh intercession for us”. Our prayers are greater and better than we know.

Again, the Christian has the sense of an unfailing Divine purpose and providence in his own life. “And we know that

to them that love God all things work together for good, *even* to them that are called according to *his* purpose. For whom he foreknew, he also foreordained *to be* conformed Predestin- to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-ation. born among many brethren : and whom he foreordained, them he also called : and whom he called, them he also justified : and whom he justified, them he also glorified " (*ib.* 28-30).

This is one side of a great mystery, which can only be expressed under our present limitations by placing side by side two complementary truths, God's predestination and man's free co-operation. In the present passage St. Paul is addressing those who had undoubtedly been "called", for they were already in the Church by baptism. He is encouraging them by the thought of God's unswerving purpose. Already, in the mind of God, predestination and calling have found their accomplishment in the great consummation of "glory". But to accomplish them in human lives needs man's own effort, and the individual man may fail. Cf. 1 Cor. ix. 27.

Last and greatest consolation is the thought of the intercession of Christ Himself "at the right hand of God", and His undying love of His people. And so in the face of a The Love hostile world, faith can fling out her challenge. "Who of Christ. shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or anguish, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? . . . Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us" (*ib.* 35, 37). And in imperishable words the Apostle closes with his own personal conviction, the very secret of his life : "I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (*ib.* 38, 39).

The next three chapters (ix.-xi.) deal with the momentous problem of the failure of the Jewish nation as a whole to recognise and accept Jesus as their Messiah. Even assuming that The the Roman Church mostly consisted of Gentile converts, failure of this was a problem which could not fail to exercise Israel. them as they studied the Old Testament. Moreover, the Christian teaching was being ceaselessly attacked by the Jews, who could

still point to the Temple, and its round of services, and to their national existence and hopes yet unimpaired. And even in later times, though the judgment of God had visibly intervened in the destruction of the Temple and the scattering of the Jews, the age-long refusal of Israel to accept Jesus was (and is still) a strange and mysterious thing.

To St. Paul it was a personal sorrow of the deepest sort. There was no question with him as to the inseparable connection of the Christian faith with the history of the Israelites, "whose is the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of *God*, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom is Christ as concerning the flesh, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen" (Rom. ix. 4, 5).

Is not the Jewish failure a contradiction of all the providence and the promises of God?

No, replies the Apostle, for (1) The Scriptures throughout shew that there is a method of *selection* in God's dealings. Merely belonging to a family or nation does not necessarily imply God's favour. This is seen in the choice of Isaac rather than Ishmael, of Jacob and not Esau.

(2) God's purposes are inscrutable and not to be criticised by man. "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why didst thou make me thus? Or hath not the potter a right over the clay, from the same lump to make one part a vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?" (*ib.* 20, 21).

God calls and has mercy upon whom He will. The prophets themselves (he cites Hosea ii. 23 and Isaiah x. 22-23, and i. 9) have testified to God's will on the one hand to call the Gentiles into the privileges of His people, and on the other to reject all but a "remnant" of Israel.

These are preliminary considerations which clear the ground.

Causes of
Israel's
failure.

But we can see something too of the justice of God's methods, for we can trace the *causes* of Israel's downfall. The Israelites themselves are responsible for it.

(1) They have as a nation misconceived the true nature of righteousness. "Wherefore? because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by works", *i.e.* by exact obedience to outward observances, without regard to the inward attitude to

God. (This is in accordance with the constant teaching of our Lord Himself in the Gospels.)

(2) Their attitude was not only one of ignorance, but of self-will and pride. They resented the simplicity of faith in Christ, although even Moses, in Deut. xxx., had in a memorable passage spoken of God's commandment as near to hand and plain to the conscience.

"For being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law unto righteousness to every one that believeth. . . . The word is nigh thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart : that is, the word of faith, which we preach : because if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved : for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness ; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation " (Rom. x. 3, 4, 8-10).

(3) They have neglected the full opportunities given them, both in the teaching of the prophets and in the apostolic preaching, for understanding and believing in Christ. And they had abundant warning, for the prophets had spoken both of the calling of the Gentiles and the unbelief of Israel, as, for example, Isaiah himself, lxy. 1, 2.

"And Isaiah is very bold, and saith,

"I was found of them that sought me not ;

I became manifest unto them that asked not of me.

"But as to Israel he saith, All the day long did I spread out my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people " (*ib.* 20, 21).

Lastly, in xi. he suggests some *consolations* for the present failure of Israel.

(1) Israelites have not *all* failed, any more than they did in the days of Elijah, when the secret seven thousand had not bowed the knee to Baal. "Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace."

The
failure of
Israel is
not
for ever.

(2) Their general failure has led to the great invitation to the Gentiles, and to their incorporation in the Church. "Their fall is the riches of the world." (This point of view no doubt was suggested to St. Paul by his own apostolic career. He

invariably began with an appeal to the Jews, and only proceeded definitely to be "the apostle of the Gentiles" when the former refused to hear him.) Here he introduces a remarkable simile: Israel is like a cultivated olive tree, from which some of the branches were broken; to remedy this loss a "wild olive tree" was grafted into it, and partook thereby of "the root of the fulness of the olive tree". He uses this simile as a warning to Gentile converts not to be "wise in their own conceits", "not to be high-minded but fear". The Church of God did not begin with them. "It is not thou that bearest the root, but the root thee": and the same fate which had befallen the broken branches of Israel might overtake the Gentiles if they failed in faith. [It is to be noted that St. Paul here describes the Catholic Church as not an independent growth, but as a development from the root and stock of ancient Israel. It is founded upon the history and the prophecy of the old covenant.]

(3) The failure of Israel is *not* final. She will be restored. The "natural branches" will be grafted in again into "their own olive tree". The testimony of prophecy is clear. "All Israel shall be saved." God cannot contradict Himself: "the gifts and the calling of God are without repentance". This St. Paul calls "a mystery", a hidden truth which the world does not know, but which he is permitted to reveal to the Church. And it is plainly hinted that the Gentiles themselves, when their conversion is complete, will be the means of finally reconciling Israel to God. And till this happens, the full glory of the Church remains to be realised: "For if the casting away of them is the reconciling of the world, what *shall* the receiving of *them* be, but life from the dead?" (xi. 15).

And so the doctrinal part of the epistle ends with a burst of praise and wonder, as the Apostle contemplates the mystery of the ways and purposes of the Triune God. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgements, and his ways past tracing out! . . . For of him, and through him, and unto him, are all things. To him *be* the glory for ever. Amen" (ib. 33, 36).

The remaining chapters (xii.-xvi.) are of a different character. They deal with the *practical* application of the great principles of the Gospel which have just been expounded.

First the Gospel demands personal *consecration*. Instead of the sacrifices of the Law, irrational, dead victims, the Christian must offer his own body :

“ I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is your reasonable service* ” (Rom. xii. 1).

The
Gospel in
human
life.

Moreover, the Church is a society, a body, of which each individual is a member. Each one has his gifts and his work. He must devote himself to making the best of these, in due subordination to the rest.

“ And having gifts differing according to the grace that was given to us, whether prophecy, *let us prophesy* according to the proportion of our faith ; or ministry, *let us give ourselves* to our ministry ; or he that teacheth, to his teaching ; or he that exhorteth, to his exhorting : he that giveth, *let him do it* with liberality ; he that ruleth, with diligence ; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness ” (*ib.* 6-8).

The Church is living in the world, and all the social relations of Christians, whether to one another or to the heathen, must be ruled by love without hypocrisy. Hence will follow industry, cheerfulness, sympathy, humility, forbearance, forgiveness.

“ Bless them that persecute you : bless and curse not. Rejoice with them that rejoice ; weep with them that weep. Be of the same mind one toward another. Set not your mind on high things, but condescend to things that are lowly. Be not wise in your own conceits ” (*ib.* 14-16).

Again, the Church is living under an organised civil government. What is to be the attitude of Christians towards the officers of the Empire of Rome ? This was a question of the first importance. The Apostle's reply is perfectly definite. As yet indeed there had been no great collision between the Church and the Empire. It was certain to come, but St. Paul is anxious that no excuse for persecution should be given by the apparent disloyalty of Christians. They must submit themselves to their civil rulers. Nor is such an attitude merely expedient. It is fundamentally *right*, for all established government has behind it a Divine authority. “ There is no power but of God : the powers that be are ordained of God.”

The Civil
Govern-
ment.

“Wherefore *ye* must needs be in subjection, not only because of the wrath, but also for conscience sake.¹ For for this cause ye pay tribute also ; for they are ministers of God’s service, attending continually upon this very thing. Render to all their dues : tribute to whom tribute *is due* ; custom to whom custom ; fear to whom fear ; honour to whom honour ” (Rom. xiii. 5-7).

Again the Apostle reverts to the ruling principle of Christian *love*. This is the summary of all right conduct.

“For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not covet, and if there be any other commandment, it is summed up in this word, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour : love therefore is the fulfilment of the law ” (*ib.* 9-10).

Love too must govern all questions of controversy among Christians themselves. He alludes to such difficulties as those caused by the scruples of one man (the Jewish convert ?) about eating certain ‘ meats ’ ; whereas another (the Gentile) “ hath faith to eat all things ” ; or again, the scruples of one who esteemeth “ one day above another ” (the Sabbath or other Jewish holy days), while another “ esteemeth every day alike ”. Such questions may seem trivial, but in practice they were just the things that might divide Christian unity. St. Paul’s own feeling is clearly on the side of freedom. “ I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean of itself. . . . The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.” Nevertheless, the scruples of the ‘ weak ’ must be respected, and borne with sympathetically. Throughout is to be noticed the Apostle’s width of view, and his desire to do justice to both sides. Two considerations he specially insists on. It is not for one man to judge another. Each is responsible to Christ for himself and his conduct.

“For whether we live, we live unto the Lord ; or whether we die, we die unto the Lord : whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord’s. For to this end Christ died, and lived *again*, that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living. But thou, why dost thou judge thy brother ? or thou again, why

¹ *I.e.* not merely because rulers are able to punish men for disobedience, but because it is wrong to disobey them.

dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgement-seat of God" (Rom. xiv. 8-10).

And again, the claims of *conscience* are paramount and sacred. It is not so much a question as to whether a man does or refrains from doing this or that; the important thing is his own conscientiousness.

"Let each man be fully assured in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that eateth, eateth unto the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, unto the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks" (Rom. xiv. 5, 6).

Lastly, the rule of charity requires that we should respect the conscientious scruples of other men, even if we with equal conscientiousness are not bound by their rules. It may even be right to deny ourselves what we think lawful, for the sake of others. "It is good not to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor *to do anything* whereby thy brother stumbleth" (*ib.* 21). We must not "please ourselves", for Christ Himself did not do so; even submitting Himself to Jewish ordinances and becoming "a minister of the circumcision". This path of self-renunciation which He followed has its lesson for Jewish and Gentile Christian alike. It "confirmed the promises given unto the fathers" (in Old Testament): and it brought the revelation of mercy to the Gentiles, that message of joy and hope in which it is the Apostle's desire that the Roman Christians should fully share. "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, in the power of the Holy Ghost" (Rom. xv. 13).

The epilogue (xv. 14-xvi.) is of a more personal nature. He is conscious of having written to the Romans "the more boldly". But he pleads his own special call to the Gentiles: he is as it were their priest, offering them up as his sacrifice. And his ministry has been justified by Christ's work through him, "for the obedience of the Gentiles, by word and deed, in the power of signs and wonders, in the power of the Holy Ghost; so that from Jerusalem, and round about even unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ" (*ib.* 18, 19).

Again, he assures the Romans of his own earnest desire to

visit them : " whensoever I go into Spain ". Meanwhile his first duty is to carry to Jerusalem the contributions of Macedonia and Achaia. But this task will not be without its difficulties. He has earnest need of the prayers of the Romans.

" Now I beseech you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me ; that I may be delivered from them that are disobedient in Judaea, and *that* my ministration which *I have* for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints ; that I may come unto you in joy through the will of God, and together with you find rest " (*ib.* 30-32).

Both his forebodings and his desires were fulfilled ; but the way of fulfilment was very different to what he anticipated.

The epistle closes with a number of affectionate greetings to individual Christians at Rome. These are interesting from several points of view. They shew that St. Paul had an extensive knowledge already of the members of the Roman Church. Twenty-four are mentioned by name and others are alluded to. Some of them are St. Paul's own relations, Andronicus, Junia, Herodion. Others he had made acquaintance with in other parts of the world, as fellow-labourers and fellow-sufferers for Christ. Notable among these are Priscilla and Aquila, " my fellow-workers in Christ Jesus : Who for my life laid down their own necks ; unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles ". " Mary, who bestowed much labour on you " ; " the beloved Persis, who laboured much in the Lord " ; Epænetus, the first convert to Christ from Achaia. On the other hand, Andronicus and Junia were " in Christ " before the Apostle himself. (As these were his relations, they may have had some hidden influence on his own conversion.)

It may be gathered also, as already suggested, that the Roman Church consisted chiefly of congregations meeting at the houses of the richer Christians, or formed secretly among the households of great Roman nobles. So we read of ' the Church ' which is in the house of Priscilla and Aquila ; and the " brethren " and the " saints " which are " with " others mentioned by name. Or again, he speaks of the Christians in the households of Aristobulus and Narcissus. The former was probably related to the

Herods, the latter may have been the well-known and powerful freedman (now dead) of the Emperor Claudius. Such a loose organisation had its special perils, and the Apostle's warning and promise are alike significant :

"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which are causing the divisions and occasions of stumbling, contrary to the doctrine which ye learned : and turn away from them. . . . And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly " (xvi. 17, 20).

The Christian companions of St. Paul at Corinth also have their share of mention. In the first place stands a woman, "Phoebe, our sister, a servant" (*i.e.* no doubt, a deaconess ; see p. 186) "of the Church that is at Cenchrea." She is specially commended to their hospitality and help : and it seems probable that she was about to start for Rome as the bearer of the letter.

Greetings
from
Corinth.

Others mentioned are Timothy, Lucius (see Acts xiii. 1), Jason (Acts xvii. 5-9), and a kinsman, Sosipater. The Christian scribe who wrote at St. Paul's dictation is allowed to put in a word for himself ;

"I Tertius, who write this epistle, salute you in the Lord."

Two notable Corinthians add their greetings. Gaius, who was not only entertaining the Apostle, but kept open house for the whole Church ; Erastus, "the treasurer of the city".

The letter ends with a magnificent doxology, which gathers up all time and all the nations in its Catholic embrace :

"Now to him that is able to stablish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which hath been kept in silence through times eternal, but now is manifested, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, is made known unto all the nations unto obedience of faith ; to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory for ever. Amen " (Rom. xvi. 25-27).

Here, as in the opening words, we catch the 'imperial' note—the foreshadowing of that splendid conception of the Church which is developed in the later epistles, written during the Apostle's own residence in the ruling city.

CHAPTER XII

THE FINAL JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM

Thus onward still we press,
Through evil and through good,
Through pain, or poverty, or want,
Through peril or through blood.

THE journey to Jerusalem, carrying the alms of the Gentile churches of Macedonia and Greece, a journey looked forward to by the Apostle with mingled hope and apprehension, was now undertaken (Acts xx., xxi.) It was his first intention to keep the coming Passover in Jerusalem, and to take the shortest way by a sea-voyage from Corinth to Syria. But the discovery of a Jewish plot caused this plan to be altered. It was decided to make the first part of the journey by land, through Macedonia, as far as Philippi. Certain delegates accompanied the Apostle, Sopater of Beroea—the son of Pyrrhus, two Thessalonians—Aristarchus and Secundus ; Gaius of Derbe and Timothy—and two Ephesians, Tychicus and Trophimus. These went on in advance and waited at Troas. At Philippi, St. Paul was evidently joined by St. Luke (for from now to the end of the Acts, the historian again speaks periodically in the first person “we” (discontinued since Acts xvi. 16). “The days of unleavened bread” were kept at Philippi, doubtless not merely as the Jewish festival, but as the Christian Easter. A voyage of five days from Neapolis, the port of Philippi, brought them to Troas. Here a stay of a week was made, which enabled the Christians of Troas to have the privilege of St. Paul’s presence at their Sunday Eucharist.

We know so little of the details of the early Christian worship

that the little picture which is drawn of this gathering at Troas has more than usual interest. It was 'the first day of the week': the meeting took place in the evening, but was prolonged till after midnight. Its primary purpose was 'to break bread', its place 'an upper chamber'.

The
Eucharist
at Troas.

There were 'many lamps', in all probability intended to give a touch of splendour and joy to the ceremony. Before the actual Eucharist, there was a sermon. St. Paul was the preacher: it was a farewell discourse and lengthy: and had one notable interruption.

"And there sat in the window a certain young man named Eutychus, borne down with deep sleep; and as Paul discoursed yet longer, being borne down by his sleep he fell down from the third story, and was taken up dead. And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him said, Make ye no ado; for his life is in him" (Acts xx. 9, 10).

It was the Sunday after Easter and the raising of one from the dead was indeed a notable "sign". The celebration and communion followed, and St. Paul continued his words, probably not now a formal discourse, but affectionate conversation and personal encouragement, until daybreak.

A ship for the coasting journey had apparently been chartered. St. Paul, evidently desiring solitude for a time, preferred to go by land to the ship's first stopping place, Assos; but insisted on his companions going in the ship. At Assos he embarked and the voyage proceeded by day stages, stopping the nights at Mitylene, "over against" Chios and at Samos. Ephesus would have been the next obvious port, but time was pressing and St. Paul eager, as he had missed the Passover at Jerusalem, to be there for Pentecost, decided to sail past Ephesus and land at Miletus. Here the travellers spent the second Sunday after Easter. Ephesus, though he could not visit it, was much in the Apostle's thoughts, and he dispatched a message to the elders of the Ephesian Church, asking them to come to Miletus, thirty miles away, to meet him.

The
Journey
resumed.

At this meeting he delivered a notable charge, the only one directly addressed to those who, in later times, would be spoken of as the clergy or priests of the Church. St. Luke has preserved at least a summary of what he said. It was of the nature

of a solemn farewell. He was convinced that those whom he was addressing would "see his face no more". He makes a review, Charge therefore, of his own three years of ministry in Asia ; to the Elders of his sorrows and tears and the trials that had beset him Ephesus. through Jewish malignity. He claims that throughout it all he has persevered in setting before the Jews and Greeks the full Gospel of "repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ". He is "pure from the blood of all men", i.e. if they are lost, he is free from responsibility—for "I shrank not", he says, "from declaring unto you the whole counsel of God".

Whatever may have been his sufferings in the past, the omens are darker for the future.

"And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there : save that the Holy Ghost testifieth unto me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. But I hold not my life of any account, as dear unto myself, so that I may accomplish my course, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God" (Acts xx. 22-24).

Unmoved himself, he fears for the steadfastness of his flock and their ministers. He reminds his hearers of their own office, given from above, and its awful responsibilities.

"Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in the which the Holy Ghost hath made you bishops, to feed the Church of God, which he purchased with his own blood" (*ib.* 28).

He foresees with prophetic certainty that "grievous wolves" will attack the flock ; and even from the priesthood itself will arise heretics and leaders of schism. Therefore he bids them "watch and remember".

In conclusion, he reminds them of his own example of incorruptible sincerity : "I coveted no man's silver, or gold or apparel"—"these hands ministered unto my necessities". The priesthood is not to be a lucrative profession, but a life of labour for the support of the weak—in the spirit of that unwritten saying of the Lord Jesus, "It is more blessed to give than to receive".

Then kneeling down he prayed with them all. An outburst of affection and grief followed the prayer. "They all wept sore,

and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him". They then accompanied him to the ship for the final parting.

The voyage seems to have been favourable; they had a "straight course" to Cos, then to Rhodes and next to Patara. Here another ship was found for the voyage to Phoenicia, which, instead of hugging the shore, sailed straight to its destination at Tyre, leaving Cyprus "on the left hand". At Tyre another week was spent with the Christians of the place, where St. Paul was again warned by the voice of prophecy that peril was awaiting him at Jerusalem. A remarkable scene is described at his departure. All the brethren, with their wives and children, accompanied the little party from the city to the beach. Here all knelt down and prayed, and then bade the travellers an affectionate farewell. From Tyre they sailed to Ptolemais (Acre), where there was also a Christian congregation with whom a day was spent. Thence a land journey brought them to Caesarea.

Here some time was spent at the house of a remarkable Christian, one of the original "Seven" of Acts vi., Philip, styled "the evangelist" perhaps with special allusion to his preaching at Samaria and his conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch. It was a strange revolution that he who had assisted at the stoning of Stephen should now be the honoured Christian guest of one of Stephen's original colleagues. It is also mentioned that Philip had four daughters "virgins, which did prophesy". This does not mean merely that they were unmarried. They belonged to the order (dating from the earliest days of the Church) of women who had definitely vowed themselves to the single life. And they possessed the gift which St. Paul had especially praised to the Corinthians, "prophecy".

Here, too, Christian prophecy gave its final warning to him of the danger ahead. Agabus, whose prediction of a famine had already been mentioned (Acts xi. 28), arrived at Caesarea, and by an acted parable, like those employed by the Old Testament prophets, emphasised his message:

"And coming to us, and taking Paul's girdle, he bound his own feet and hands, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this

The
Christians
of Tyre.

The house
of Philip.

Prophecies
of Peril.

girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles" (Acts xxi. 11).

But the Apostle was unmoved alike by the prediction and by the outcries of his friends and his hosts. Why did they weep, he asked, and break his heart? He was ready even to die at Jerusalem "for the name of the Lord Jesus". Seeing his mind was fixed, they could only reply, "The will of the Lord be done".

So the day arrived for the final journey. St. Paul and his companions were accompanied by some of the Christians from Caesarea, including "one Mnason of Cyprus, an early disciple" (probably meaning one of the first or original disciples of Acts i.). He had offered them a lodging, though it is uncertain whether at Jerusalem or at some intermediate halting-place on the seventy miles journey.

They arrived at Jerusalem probably two days before the Feast of Pentecost, and were at once gladly welcomed by the Christian Jerusalem Church. An official reception took place the next day, ^{The vow in the} before James and "all the elders". Apparently none of the Twelve were now in Jerusalem. In addition to presenting the offerings of the Gentiles, St. Paul described in detail the results of his preaching to the Gentiles, and his hearers "glorified God".

But, like him, they apprehended trouble. They warned him that there were now "many myriads" of Jews who had embraced the Gospel, but were all still "zealous for the law". Rumours had come that St. Paul was teaching not only Gentile, but Jewish Christians to forsake the teaching of Moses and abandon circumcision. As far as the Gentiles were concerned James and the elders were ready to abide by the decision already given (see Chap. V.). But they were anxious to prevent any outburst of ill-feeling from the Jewish converts. They suggested that St. Paul should visibly shew himself a careful observer of Jewish religious customs by associating himself with four men who had taken the usual Nazarite vow for a period. They could not be released from this vow, and cut their hair (which was the outward sign of release) until the sacrifices had been offered. It was customary for wealthier Jews to pay for these sacrifices on behalf of their poorer brethren. It was suggested that St. Paul himself should do this.

“ We have four men which have a vow on them ; these take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges for them, that they may shave their heads : and all shall know that there is no truth in the things whereof they have been informed concerning thee ; but that thou thyself also walkest orderly, keeping the law ” (Acts xxi. 23, 24).

The Apostle readily agreed : he himself had taken similar vows in the past (p. 66). He went into the Temple with the men in question, perhaps taking on himself the same vow which bound them, and day by day offered at his own cost the sacrifice to release them.

All seemed to be going well until the end of the first week in Jerusalem. Then the storm suddenly burst. It was *The Jewish* not due to the suspicions of Jewish Christians, but to *attack*. the hatred of the Jews themselves, the same spirit which years before had cried out “ Crucify Him ”.

St. Paul had evidently been closely watched ; the spark was put to the fire by some Jews from Asia who doubtless knew him well through his work at Ephesus. Having caught sight in the city of Trophimus, the Ephesian in the Apostle’s company, they jumped to the conclusion that this or other uncircumcised Greeks had actually been brought into the Temple, thus committing sacrilege. The cry of fanaticism was raised :

“ Men of Israel, help : This is the man, that teacheth all *men* everywhere against the people, and the law, and this place : and moreover he brought Greeks also into the temple and hath polluted this holy place ” (Acts xxi. 28).

In a moment the place was in an uproar. St. Paul was seized and dragged out of the Temple into the outer court. The doors were shut by the Temple-guards, and the Apostle was helpless in the midst of an infuriated mob, whose one object was to kill him. But for the vigilance of the Roman garrison in the fortress of Antonia, which commanded the Temple, the Acts would have ended here. The news of a serious riot was carried at once to Claudius Lysias, the commanding officer, a ‘tribune’, who himself rushed upon the scene with a strong force of soldiers. The terror of Rome stayed for a moment the hands of the mob. The soldiers seized Paul, bound him with two chains, and Lysias then endeavoured to find out from the crowd who he was, and why they

were ill-treating him. "Some shouted one thing and some another"—so the order was given to conduct the prisoner to the Tower Antonia. The mob, seeing their prey snatched from them, rushed violently after the soldiers, shouting "Away with him". So hot was their pursuit, that as the soldiers went up the stairs of the Tower, they had actually to carry St. Paul in their arms to protect him.

The Apostle's courage did not desert him. He addressed Lysias in Greek, and asked permission to speak. The officer was surprised at hearing Greek—for he had made up his mind apparently already who his prisoner was.

St. Paul's defence to Israel. "Art thou not then the Egyptian, which before these days stirred up to sedition and led out into the wilderness the four thousand men of the Assassins?"¹ (Acts xxi. 38).

St. Paul's reply was dignified enough. "I am a Jew, of Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city." The soldiers halted, and permission was given to the Apostle to speak to the people. It was a memorable scene, and St. Luke, who witnessed it, gives some graphic touches. The Apostle stood on the stairs, he "beckoned with the hand to the people". A supernatural hush fell upon the howling mob, 'a great silence'; and when the first words were heard to be in "the Hebrew tongue", "they were the more quiet". "Brethren and fathers, hear ye the defence which I now make unto you." It was the moment of Israel's trial—like that other moment when Pilate had cried to another mob, "Behold the man".

Briefly he recounted his own early history, his birth at Tarsus, his education at Jerusalem "at the feet of Gamaliel"; on the strictest lines of Jewish tradition—"being zealous for God, as ye all are this day!"—and his active persecution of the Christians "unto the death". Then he described the great turning-point, the scene on the road to Damascus, the blaze of light, the voice of Jesus Himself from heaven, his own blinded entrance into Damascus, and the visit of Ananias. He quotes some further words which the latter had spoken to him.

"The God of our fathers hath appointed thee to know his will, and to see the Righteous One, and to hear a voice from his

¹ This event is alluded to by Josephus. The 4000 were *Sicarii*, the party of 'Daggersmen'.

mouth. For thou shalt be a witness for him unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard. And now why tarriest thou ? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on his name " (Acts xxii. 14-16).

He then describes a second vision of the Lord which he saw on another visit to Jerusalem (p. 15), leading up to the great command, " I will send thee forth far hence unto the Gentiles ". This was too much for his hearers. Their silence and patience were exhausted at the very utterance of such an accursed name. St. Luke, with his vivid power of portraying a scene in a few words, describes what he saw and heard.

" And they gave him audience unto this word ; and they lifted up their voice, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth : for it is not fit that he should live. And as they cried out, and threw off their garments, and cast dust into the air, the chief captain commanded him to be brought into the castle, bidding that he should be examined by scourging, that he might know for what cause they so shouted against him " (*ib.* 22-24).

Claudius Lysias had probably not understood one word of the speech. His patience too was ended. Anger and curiosity burned to find out what it was which excited a tumult for which he himself might be held responsible. Rome had sharp methods of extracting the truth from a slave. Let the prisoner be scourged till he confesses in a language that can be understood ! But like the magistrates of Philippi (p. 53) he was soon to learn his mistake. Paul was a Roman citizen and he had a right to be treated as such. It was illegal even to bind him before trial. Yet it was not till he had actually been tied with thongs for scourging that he asked the centurion, " Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman and uncondemned ? " The news was swiftly taken to the tribune, who was at first incredulous. He himself had paid ' a great sum ' for this citizenship, and how could a prisoner of this sort possess it ? But the Apostle could answer with truth, ' I am a Roman born ' (p. 6). There was no more question of examination by torture. Lysias was frightened at the thought that he had already gone too far. There must be proper legal procedure. The next day St. Paul, loosed from his chains, was brought at the tribune's

The
rights of
a Roman
Citizen.

order before a meeting of the highest Jewish court—the “council” or Sanhedrin. .

This council, the same body which had tried our Lord, and in which St. Paul had probably himself sat at the trial of St. Stephen, was presided over by a despicable character, the Sadducean high priest, Ananias. What justice the Apostle might expect at this tribunal was shewn at the very opening of the case. He began his defence, “looking steadfastly on the council”, with the statement of his own sincerity. “I have lived before God in all good conscience until this day.” The high priest interrupted and told the officer “to smite him on the mouth”. For once the Apostle’s indignation blazed out :

“God shall smite thee, *thou* whited wall : and sittest thou to judge me according to the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law ? ” (xxiii. 3).

He was reproved by the attendants for “reviling God’s high priest”. His answer seems to be an apology, though probably with a touch of satire.

“I wist not, brethren, that he was high priest : for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of a ruler of thy people ” (*ib.* 5).

It may be that he had not recognised that the president was the high priest ; more likely he was pointing out how unlike a high priest this conduct was.

St. Paul apparently did not continue his defence, but flung an “apple of discord” into the assembly. It was made up of the two opposing factions, Pharisees and Sadducees, who hated each other as much as they hated Paul. In a moment they were turned upon each other by the Apostle’s words :

“Brethren, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees : touching the hope of resurrection of the dead I am called in question ” (*ib.* 6).

The Sadducees, St. Luke explains, “say there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit, but the Pharisees confess both”. A yell arose from the two parties, and the Pharisees immediately took the prisoner’s side, with words purposely intended to annoy their opponents :

“We find no evil in this man : and what if a spirit hath spoken to him, or an angel ? ” (*ib.* 9).

So great was the confusion that Lysias, seeing that St. Paul’s

life was again in danger, extricated him by the hands of his soldiers and carried him once more to the fortress.

St. Paul's conduct in thus breaking up the council has been often criticised. Possibly it was an act of indignant impulse, which he seems afterwards to have regretted (cf. Acts xxiv. 20, 21). But it must be remembered that (1) justice from such a tribunal was clearly impossible; (2) St. Paul was certainly a Pharisee, and did not hesitate on other occasions to allude to it. He would still sympathise with the Pharisees rather than with their opponents; (3) the resurrection of the dead really was a vital question in his defence (cf. xxiv. 15, xxvi. 8), and he might reasonably appeal on that ground to the Pharisees.

That same night the Apostle was encouraged in his weariness and depression by a vision of Christ Himself:

"Be of good cheer: for as thou hast testified concerning me at Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome" (*ib.* 11).

Jewish malice was prepared to stop at nothing. The very next day a conspiracy was discovered of more than forty Jews who "had bound themselves under a curse" neither to eat nor drink till they had killed Paul. They proposed to the chief priests that a further trial should be demanded from the tribunal; and that as soon as Paul was caught sight of, he should be assassinated. The chief priests apparently raised no objection, and the scheme was only frustrated through a nephew of St. Paul's. He discovered the plot, sought at once a private interview with the tribunal and disclosed the facts. Claudius Lysias saw that matters were becoming very serious and decided at once to hand over his prisoner to the chief Roman official, Felix, the 'governor' or procurator of the province of Judaea, who was then at Caesarea. The strength of the military guard which Lysias thought necessary for the prisoner shews what he thought of the turbulence of the Jews: "200 infantry of the line, 70 cavalry, and 200 spearmen" (probably from the provincial forces). With the prisoner he sent a letter:

"Claudius Lysias unto the most excellent governor Felix, greeting. This man was seized by the Jews, and was about to be slain of them, when I came upon them with the soldiers, and rescued him, having learned that he was a Roman. And desiring to know the cause wherefore they accused him, I brought him

A Con-
spiracy
defeated.

down unto their council : whom I found to be accused about questions of their law, but to have nothing laid to his charge worthy of death or of bonds. And when it was shewn to me that there would be a plot against the man, I sent him to thee forthwith, charging his accusers also to speak against him before thee " (Acts xxiii. 26-30).

The letter is business-like, and correct enough, except in what it omits—the unpleasant fact that Lysias had bound a Roman citizen without trial and had been on the point of scourging him.

The first stage as far as Antipatris was accomplished by night ; here as the chief peril was over, or because they might be urgently needed at Jerusalem, the foot soldiers returned ; and the cavalry conducted St. Paul to Caesarea. Here Felix, having read the letter, asked what was St. Paul's province. Cilicia was an ' imperial ' province ; so he accepted the prisoner and housed him in the palace of Herod until a formal trial could take place.

We are not told how the forty-odd assassins escaped from their vow—but it is fairly certain that they did *not* starve themselves to death. When men lose the sense of justice, the sense of honour does not long survive. And Jewish casuistry had easy methods for absolving men from their oaths. St. Paul had now left Jerusalem for the last time, as far as we know, and he was a prisoner in the hands of Rome.

CHAPTER XIII

ST. PAUL AT CAESAREA. THE APPEAL TO ROME

O comrade bold of toil and pain !
Thy trial how severe,
When severed first by prisoner's chain
From Thy loved labour-sphere.

Say, did impatience first impel
The heaven-sent bond to break ?
Or couldst thou bear its hindrance well,
Loitering for Jesu's sake ?

J. H. NEWMAN.

ANANIAS, the high priest, and his coterie of "elders", as directed by Lysias, arrived at Caesarea five days later, to bring their formal indictment against St. Paul. They had hired an advocate, a professional 'orator', called Tertullus.

His opening speech for the prosecution was apparently short, for he recognised the importance of not wearying Felix with words; but doubtless St. Luke's concise account (Acts xxiv. 2-8) is only a summary. He began by Tertullus. flattery, complimenting the procurator on "the great quietness" which had resulted from his rule, and on the "very worthy deeds" which he had performed towards the Jews. He then charged the prisoner with being a public nuisance and a stirrer-up of sedition "among all Jews throughout the world", the charge which would be most likely to be thought serious by the Romans: he was also "a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes": lastly, he had endeavoured to profane the Temple.¹ He

¹ The complaint that Lysias had "with great violence" intervened and prevented the Jews from judging St. Paul according to their law, is in R.V., placed in the margin, but to retain it in the text would give a better sense.

requested that Felix would look into the case and examine the witnesses and the prisoner. After the Jewish accusers had spoken to the same effect, Felix called upon St. Paul to speak in his own defence.

St. Paul would not, like Tertullus, flatter the judge, but he expressed satisfaction at pleading before one who really knew something about the matters in question, having been a judge among the Jews for years. (St. Luke adds a little later that Felix had very considerable knowledge of "the Way", *i.e.* of Christianity.) He then dealt with the accusations. The charge of sedition, he said, was false, and no proof of it had been or could be alleged. Neither in temple, nor synagogues, nor in the city had he raised any disturbance. And so far from profaning the Temple, he had come to Jerusalem to worship, and to bring alms and offerings to the poor of his own nation. His presence in the Temple was for the quiet performance of a Jewish religious custom. And he pointed out that the Jews from Asia who had first raised that charge were conspicuous by their absence as witnesses. As to the so-called "sect of the Nazarenes", he boldly maintained that its object was to worship the God of the Jews, it fully accepted the teaching of the law and the prophets, and it held to the great Jewish hope of the resurrection of all the dead, both just and unjust. The only charge that might fairly be brought against him, he said, was that he had upset the Sanhedrin by speaking of the Resurrection.

Felix clearly saw that there was no case against the prisoner, but had not courage to say so. He preferred to avoid a Jewish outburst by a remand, on the pretext that he wished to hear the tribune's view of the matter. St. Paul was committed to the guard of a centurion, in *libera custodia*, in which his friends would have free access to him. Scandalously enough, this imprisonment lasted two years, without further trial—in the hope, as St. Luke says, that the prisoner might be able to raise money to bribe Felix for his release.

But the procurator was interested in his prisoner and frequently talked to him; and, on one occasion at least, gave him a private hearing, accompanied by his Jewish wife Drusilla. She was a daughter of Herod Agrippa I., and was living in adultery with Felix, as her real husband was Azizus, King of Emesa.

Felix and Drusilla wished to hear a statement of 'the faith in Christ', but, like John the Baptist, St. Paul boldly preached, to the discomfiture of his hearers, who had perhaps expected some new and thrilling speculation as to the unseen world, the great moral fundamentals. Repentance from open sin was a necessary first step before any one could receive the Gospel of Christ.

"And as he reasoned of righteousness, and temperance, and the judgement to come, Felix was terrified, and answered, Go thy way for this time; and when I have a convenient season, I will call thee unto me" (Acts xxiv. 25).

No bribe was forthcoming, and when Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus, in order to curry favour with the Jews (he was recalled to Rome to answer a charge of massacring a number of Jews at Caesarea) he left St. Paul in prison.

Festus was a governor of a different type. He appears to have wished to deal justly with the prisoner, though he had no knowledge like Felix of the circumstances, and he was not anxious to begin his administration with a quarrel with the Jews. The case was brought to his knowledge at once. After three days at Caesarea he went up to Jerusalem, and was at once approached by the high priest and the leading Jews with a request for a fresh trial of St. Paul at Jerusalem. Their intention was to waylay and assassinate him on the journey. Festus may have suspected them, but at any rate he refused to bring the prisoner to Jerusalem. He would try him, he said, at Caesarea, and his accusers might accompany the governor's escort when he himself returned there.

This took place in a few days, and on the morrow of his arrival at Caesarea, Festus took his seat on the *bema* for an official hearing. The trial was much like the former one. The deputation from Jerusalem made all sorts of charges against St. Paul "which they could not prove". And Paul's reply was evidently on the same lines as before.

"Neither against the law of the Jews, nor against the temple, nor against Caesar, have I sinned at all" (Acts xxv. 8).

Festus wished to conciliate the Jews and now proposed a trial at Jerusalem, apparently before the Sanhedrin, but in his own presence. But St. Paul knew his privileges as a Roman citizen. He would have no more to do with Jewish justice. Festus, appar-

ently, was unwilling to give his judgment. The appeal to the Emperor was left, and he determined to use it.

“ I am standing before Caesar’s judgement seat, where I ought to be judged : to the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou also very well knowest. If then I am a wrong-doer, and have committed anything worthy of death, I refuse not to die : but if none of those things is *true*, whereof these accuse me, no man can give me up unto them. I appeal unto Caesar ” (*ib.* 10, 11).

There was no answer to this but the one that Festus gave, after a consultation with his own officials. The right of every subject to submit his case to the Emperor was undoubted. “ Hast thou appealed unto Caesar ? Unto Caesar shalt thou go.”

It was a very important step ; and there is some difficulty in estimating what was in St. Paul’s mind in appealing to Rome. Clearly he could not be asking Caesar to decide the claim of Christianity as regards Judaism. But he had been accused of seditious conduct, and on this count, at least, he might lawfully appeal as a Roman citizen who had been denied justice. But we may well believe that he was guided in what he did, perhaps consciously, as a means of fulfilling his desire to visit and preach at Rome.¹

Festus could not refuse the appeal to Caesar, but he was by no means comfortable about it. He was satisfied that the charge of sedition was untrue, but what was he to say to the Emperor as regards the case ? For some reason he had not been able to take the strong and logical attitude of Gallio. His ignorance of Judaism and Christianity made him uncertain as to whether the other charges against St. Paul were such as might rightly be thought serious enough to be brought before the Emperor. The Jewish religion and the sanctity of the Temple were recognised and safeguarded by Rome. It was possible that St. Paul’s teaching was an infringement of these Jewish privileges, and might bring him under Roman law. An opportunity offered itself in the complimentary visit paid, shortly afterwards, to Festus by Herod Agrippa II., who was, by imperial

¹ St. Paul’s appeal to a heathen tribunal is not really inconsistent with his charge to the Corinthians (1. Cor. vi.) not to go to law before unbelievers. For in that case, Christians were appealing against Christians and ignoring the right of the Church to judge. Here there was no possibility of an appeal to the Church, for neither Jews nor Romans could recognise its authority.

appointment, King of N. Palestine, *i.e.* of Ituraea, Trachonitis and Abilene, and had also the oversight of the Temple and the power of appointing the high priest. Festus put St. Paul's case before him, explaining how he had refused to sentence the prisoner at the mere clamour of the Jews, telling them :

"It is not the custom of the Romans to give up any man, before that the accused have the accusers face to face, and have had opportunity to make his defence concerning the matter laid against him" (Acts xxv. 16).

At the trial, he had discovered that the charges were different from what he supposed, and concerned the Jewish religion and "one Jesus who was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive". Agrippa was interested, and wished himself to hear St. Paul. "To-morrow", answered Festus, "thou shalt hear him".

On the morrow followed the memorable scene, when before the representatives both of Rome and of the dynasty of the Herods, St. Paul made his supreme and last-recorded defence. Agrippa was accompanied by his sister Berenice. "With great pomp" they entered the auditorium of the palace; followed by a train of officials of the procurator and the chief men of Caesarea. St. Paul was brought forth before them, Agrippa, apparently out of compliment, was placed in the president's chair, and Festus opened the inquiry with a brief speech to the king. This was the man, he said, for whose death all the Jews were clamouring; he had committed nothing worthy of death, and had appealed to Caesar. Yet Festus had nothing certain to report to the Emperor concerning him. Perhaps this inquiry, with the king's assistance, might produce some more definite issue. "For", he concluded, "it seemeth to me unreasonable, in sending a prisoner, not withal to signify the charges against him" (*ib.* 27).

Agrippa gave the prisoner permission to speak. With the characteristic gesture, "stretching forth the hand", St. Paul addressed this assembly of the kings of the earth.

The speech is clearly addressed both to Jews and Gentiles. Both were present, and St. Paul recognised his 'debt' to both (Rom. i. 14). He began by expressing pleasure at pleading before King Agrippa, because he knew him to be well acquainted with all Jewish customs and questions.

St. Paul's
defence
before
Agrippa
and Festus.

The Hope
of Israel.

Then he proceeded with his defence before Israel. All the Jews, he says, know well what his life was before his conversion—"after the straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee". Nor is that for which he is being put on trial (the Gospel of Christ) alien from the Jewish religion. On the contrary it is bound up with all that great hope of Israel, for which the whole sacred nation continually pray and wait.

"I stand *here* to be judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers; unto which *promise* our twelve tribes, earnestly serving *God* night and day, hope to attain. And concerning this hope I am accused by the Jews, O king!" (Acts xxvi. 6, 7). "Why", he asks, impetuously breaking off for a moment from the development of his argument, "why is it judged incredible with you, if God doth raise the dead?" Why indeed? The prophets had foretold it, and all that had been approved by St. Paul in Judaism had earnestly looked forward to it. And he knew that his Gospel of the Resurrection was the fulfilment of the hope.

But how had he come to know this? Once he had thought very differently. He had imprisoned and persecuted and helped
 The Call to sentence to death those who had believed in Jesus
 of Christ. of Nazareth.

Then had come the great revelation of the truth. On the Damascus road, as he was on his errand of persecution, amidst a light, above the brightness of the sun, Jesus had spoken to him from heaven, and given him his great commission to be a minister and a witness: "delivering thee from the people and from the Gentiles, unto whom I send thee, to open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive remission of sins and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in me" (Acts xxvi. 17, 18).

This passage probably combines what had been said on the road with what had been further revealed to him by Ananias at Damascus, and by the Lord Himself in later visions. Paul is to be sent both to 'the people' (Israel) and to the Gentiles: as a 'minister' and 'witness' of the revelation of Jesus. He is to be the servant of truth and the champion of truth. His task is nothing less than the conversion of mankind, to turn them from the darkness and blindness of heathenism to light (an image

which the Gentile hearers would understand); and from the power of him whom the Jews knew as Satan, the 'adversary', to the Kingdom of God. This Kingdom of light and of God means for those who enter it, forgiveness of sins, and its condition is faith in Jesus.

And so, he proceeds, he was "not disobedient unto the heavenly vision": from that day to this, by the help of God, at Damascus, at Jerusalem, in Judaea, and then in the St. Paul's Gentile world he has preached repentance and con- Obedience. version. This is why the Jews have tried to kill him: and yet this message is nothing contrary to the teaching of Moses and the prophets, "that the Christ must suffer, *and* how that he first by the resurrection of the dead should proclaim light both to the people and to the Gentiles" (*ib.* 23).

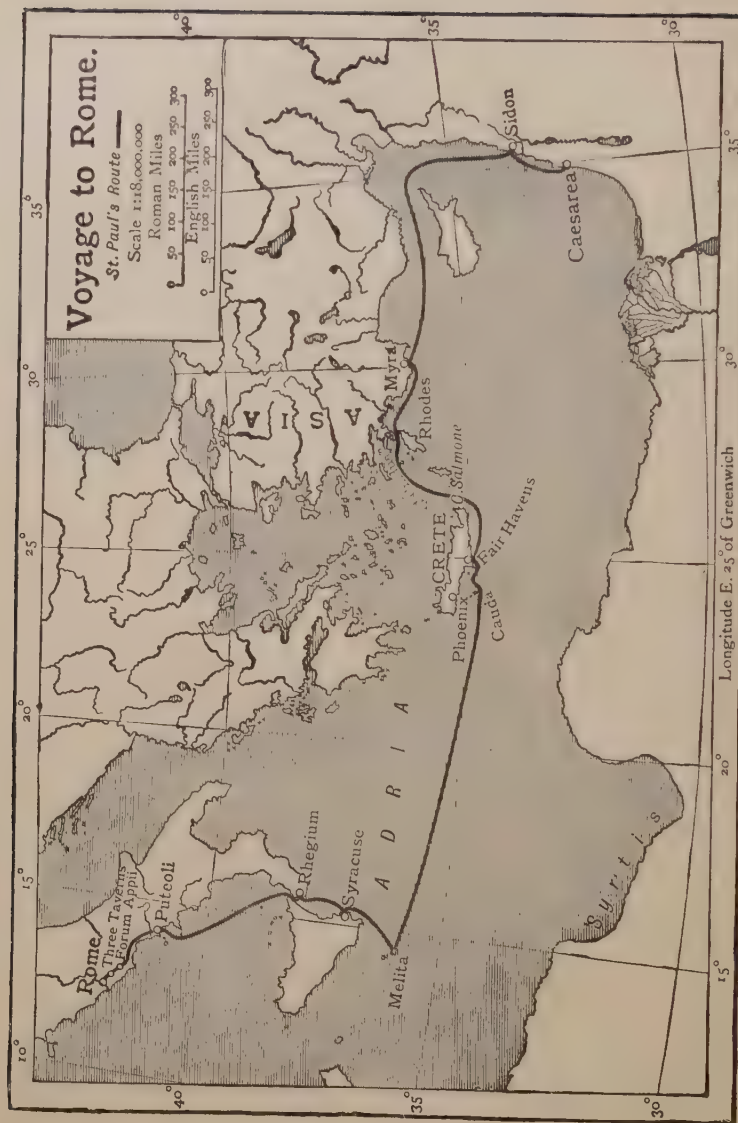
The Lord after His resurrection, and the Apostles, had unfolded the true meaning of the Old Testament which later Judaism had forgotten or ignored, especially as to the sufferings of the Messiah (Isa. lii. 4) and the great hope of conversion for the Gentile world. Here, then, St. Paul reaches in his defence the very points at issue between the Jews and himself, which had provoked their bitterest hostility—the 'offence of the Cross', the atoning Passion and Death of the Lord; and the call to the Gentiles to be 'fellow-heirs' in the new Kingdom of God, instead of being subjugated slaves crushed under the feet of a conquering worldly Messiah, as Jewish pride imagined.

But at this point the speech was suddenly interrupted by a loud exclamation not from a Jew, but from the Gentile Festus. Perhaps it was the insistence on the Resurrection Comments which stirred him, or only the enthusiasm of the of Festus and speaker. "Paul", he shouted, "thou art mad; Agrippa. thy much learning doth turn thee to madness!" With great courtesy, the Apostle replied that his words were those of "truth and soberness". But it was Agrippa that he specially desired at this moment to touch. The king, he says, knows of these things well—they have "not been done in a corner". The origin and progress of the Gospel have been before the light of day, and no thoughtful Jewish ruler can ignore them. He turned to the king with a personal appeal: "King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest". Agrippa's reply is

ambiguous, and is probably ironical ; “ With but little persuasion thou wouldest fain make me a Christian ”. He did not care to be catechised as to his faith before a Roman audience, nor to seem to be carried away by the eloquence of the prisoner. The Apostle’s reply is dignified, but full of his characteristic love of souls :

“ I would to God, that whether with little or with much, not thou only, but also all that hear me this day, might become such as I am, except these bonds ”.

Though the Gentile judge had scoffed at, and the Jewish king fenced with the Apostle’s appeal, they were both agreed on one thing : there was no case against the prisoner. The court rose at once, and after some discussion, Agrippa summed up the opinion of the hearers : “ This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Caesar ”.



CHAPTER XIV

THE VOYAGE TO ROME

Then, in such hour of need
Of your fainting, dispirited race,
Ye, like angels appear,
Radiant with ardour divine.
Beacons of hope, ye appear !
Languor is not in your heart,
Weakness is not in your word,
Weariness not on your brow.
Ye alight in our van ! at your voice,
Panic, despair, flee away.

M. ARNOLD.

ST. PAUL'S voyage to Italy, as described in Acts xxvii. by St. Luke, his companion, is one of the most vividly drawn and fascinating narratives in ancient literature ; and, *The Voyage* as often pointed out, gives us incidentally more information about ancient ships and navigation than any or all of the Greek and Roman classical authors.

St. Paul, with some other prisoners and two friends at least, Aristarchus of Thessalonica and St. Luke, was given in charge of Julius, a centurion, who belonged to the cohort called ' Augustus ' cohort.¹ The first part of the voyage was made in a coasting vessel from Adramyttium (a seaport of Mysia). The first calling-place, reached on the day after sailing, was Sidon, where Julius very kindly allowed St. Paul to land and visit friends. Contrary winds, blowing from the west, rendered it impossible to cross the open sea, as St. Paul and his party had done on their way to Jerusalem. So the ship kept a northward course, sheltered under the lee of Cyprus ; then turning westward they coasted

¹ Like our military names, ' Royal ', ' King's Own ', etc.

along by Cilicia and Pamphylia, arriving finally at Myra in Lycia. Here the centurion found a larger vessel on her way to Italy, a corn-ship from Alexandria, one of the many which conveyed the corn of Africa to feed the people of Rome. The prisoners were transferred, and the second stage of the voyage began.

The winds were still contrary, and sailing was slow. Arriving "after many days" opposite Cnidus, "it was found necessary St. Paul's to alter the course. They turned south-west and sailed warning. with difficulty past Cape Salmone, and along the south coast of Crete, until they arrived at a place called then and still 'Fair Havens' (*Kalous Limeonas*) near Lasea. Here for a time they were compelled to anchor, and St. Paul, who, it must be remembered, had considerable experience of voyages (cf. p. 110), came forward and strongly advised them to stay there for the winter. It was now past the usual time when sea voyages were made: "the Fast", *i.e.* the Day of Atonement, as St. Luke notes, was already gone by (end of September or beginning of October). In uncharted seas, the compass unknown, and with ships that could not sail close to the wind, voyages were not usually attempted in the winter season. A ship would lie up in a harbour until the spring. St. Paul warned the officers that this voyage would end in disaster, both to cargo and ship, with risk of lives being lost. But the captain and the owner of the ship took a different view. They did not consider Fair Havens a suitable place to winter in; and the majority of the sailors urged that Phoenix (the modern Lutro), some fifty miles further west, was a better place, as it faced north-east and south-east, and was almost in complete shelter.

While they were discussing this, the wind changed temporarily; a soft breeze blew from the south; the anchor was weighed, and they skirted the south coast of the island The Storm. for a few miles. Suddenly a terrific gale from the north-east, well-known to the sailors as the 'Euro-aquilo', blew down upon them from the mountains of Crete. The ship could not face it, and they were compelled to run before the wind in a south-westerly direction. A temporary lull under the lee of the island of Cauda enabled them with great difficulty to get the ship's boat on board which was being towed, and to strengthen

the hull of the ship by 'undergirding' it, *i.e.* passing ropes round it under the keel. The great fear was lest they should be driven on to the African coast among the dangerous quicksands, called the Syrtes. Here St. Luke probably failed to understand or make clear the expedient employed to alter the course. "They lowered the gear" can hardly refer to shortening sail—to lower the great main-sail would have been done previously. It may mean that they threw out a floating anchor of spars lashed together. No doubt also they rigged a small storm-sail. Next day they began to lighten the ship by throwing the cargo overboard; and the day after that all the "tackling" or "furniture" (meaning rather uncertain) shared the same fate. But the prospect became darker and darker; the storm continued without abatement.

"And when neither sun nor stars shone upon *us* for many days, and no small tempest lay on *us*, all hope that we should be saved was now taken away" (Acts xxvii. 20).

So desperate was their condition, that it was impossible to prepare or partake of a meal. But now St. Paul again stood forth, and after reminding the officers of his own disregarded warning, brought them encouragement from heaven itself.

St. Paul's
encour-
agement.

"And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of life among you, but *only* of the ship. For there stood by me this night an angel of the God whose I am, whom also I serve, saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must stand before Caesar: and lo, God hath granted thee all them that sail with thee. Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even so as it hath been spoken unto me. Howbeit we must be cast upon a certain island" (*ib.* 22-26).

The fourteenth night of this 'driving to and fro' in 'Adria' (not the Adriatic, but that part of the Mediterranean between Crete and Italy), after they had run some 500 miles before the gale, brought them as the sailors guessed near to some land. The soundings were taken, and gave first twenty and then fifteen fathoms. In fear of rocks, they cast four anchors from the stern, and began to wait anxiously for the daylight. The sailors lowered the boat, under pretence of making the prow also fast with anchors, but intending with unseamanlike selfishness to make

their own escape. St. Paul perceived their plot and immediately called the attention of centurion and soldiers to it. "Except these abide in the ship", he said, "ye cannot be saved". The soldiers cut the ropes of the boat, and let her drift away.

Day dawned at last, and once more St. Paul appears as the Divinely guided helper. Food, he said, was what they all first needed, for they had fasted for fourteen days. Then he himself "took bread and gave thanks to God in the presence of them all"—the phrase suggests that St. Luke thought how like it was to the Eucharistic acts of our Lord Himself. By beginning himself to eat he encouraged the others, 276 in all, to follow his example. They then threw the rest of the cargo of wheat into the sea, to make the ship as light as possible.

Full daylight disclosed an unknown shore; but a bay with a beach (St. Paul's Bay at Malta) was perceived, where it might be possible to drive the ship aground without disaster. **The Shipwreck.** They did not wait to hoist the anchor, but cut their cables at once, unfastened the ropes which had held the steering sweeps fixed at each side of the ship, and hoisted the smaller sail, the '*artemon*' or foresail. Thus they ran for the sandy beach, but an unforeseen danger met them. They fell into a place where two currents met, forming a hidden sandbank; on this the ship ran aground; the prow was firmly fixed in the sand, but the stern began at once to break up under the violence of the surf.

At this moment the soldiers actually proposed to kill the prisoners, for whom they were responsible, lest they might swim out and escape. Such a suggestion shows the terrible influence of the iron Roman discipline; it might actually have been followed but for the friendship which the centurion Julius had formed for St. Paul. He restrained his soldiers, and bade each man save himself as best he could. Those who could swim flung themselves into the sea; the others clutched at spars and fragments of wreckage, and "so it came to pass that they all escaped safe to the land".

This land was soon discovered to be the island of Melita, or Malta. It was part of the Roman Empire and included in the province of Sicily. The inhabitants were Phoenicians **Melita.** by origin, and St. Luke calls them 'barbarians', i.e. neither Greeks nor Romans. But they were a kind-hearted,

simple, and hospitable people. They shewed the drenched and battered survivors of the shipwreck "no common kindness". It was cold and rainy weather, but they at once lit a fire and made friends with them. A life-like picture of heathen thought is sketched by St. Luke arising out of an accident. St. Paul had been busying himself gathering sticks to feed the fire; a viper darted out from a bundle he had just flung on the blaze and bit him on the hand. The Maltese said to each other, "No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped from the sea, yet Justice hath not suffered to live. Howbeit he shook off the beast into the fire, and took no harm. But they expected that he would have swollen, or fallen down dead suddenly: but when they were long in expectation, and beheld nothing amiss come to him, they changed their minds, and said that he was a god" (Acts xxviii. 4-6).

The Resurrection promise of the Lord was thus literally fulfilled, that His disciples should "take up serpents" without harm (St. Mark xvi. 18).

The Roman governor of the island is not alluded to, but the refugees were not far from the estate of the 'chief man of the island' (St. Luke gives his proper title of honour—*protos*, 'first'), one Publius. He received St. Paul and his companions and entertained them for three days. The father of Publius was lying ill of fever and dysentery, and St. Paul by prayer and the laying on of hands restored him to health. This was followed by other miracles of healing wrought on the sick of the island: with the result that the guests were treated with great honour, and when the time of their departure came were fitted out with all necessities.

The stay at Malta lasted three months, and then Julius took advantage of the sailing of another Alexandrian corn-ship which had spent the winter in harbour there. This ship was the "Dioscuri" or "Castor and Pollux", and no doubt bore the images of "the great twin-brethren" as her figure-head. They sailed for Sicily, and touched at Syracuse, where three days were spent. The wind at first was not favourable, and the ship had to tack to make Rhegium in the Straits of Messina. But on the day after arriving there, a south wind sprung up, and they ran with a swift course to Puteoli, 180 miles,

The
Voyage
resumed.

which was covered in one day. Puteoli (*Pozzuoli*) in the Bay of Naples was the chief port for Rome, and from here the rest of the journey was accomplished by land, about 140 miles. At Puteoli they had the joy of finding a Christian congregation, and at the desire of "the brethren" a week was spent with them. As they traversed the Appian Way, they were encouraged by finding deputations from the Roman Church waiting for them both at Appii Forum, and at the 'Three Taverns' (*Tres Tabernae*). It was a good omen for the end of the journey, and "Paul thanked God and took courage".

The Rome on which St. Paul's eyes fell as he descended the slope of the Appian Way would be magnificent indeed, though very different from the Rome of the later Empire, and still more from the Rome of to-day. The same stones would be beneath his weary feet, and the same tombs flanked the road. But the Campagna can hardly have been then the desolate and fever stricken region that it was left by the Gothic wars and by the strifes of the Middle Ages. He would not see the purple dome of St. Peter's in the distance, nor the Church of St. John Lateran on his right. Nor from the Caelian hill where he was probably housed, would he look down on the great Coliseum, which in a few years his miserable countrymen carried captive by Titus were to build as a wonder of the world. But he would look across the Forum, crowded with temples, to the palace of the Caesars piled up on the Palatine hill. Near at hand also was the Circus Maximus, the vast enclosed race-course, capable of holding 100,000 spectators. We can hardly think of St. Paul, though no sightseer, as unmoved by the grandeur and the fascination of the greatest capital of the world. Yet even he can scarcely have foreseen the day when the temples would be turned to Christian churches and the city be transformed from the metropolis of the heathen gods to be in men's minds the 'city of the Apostles'—finding its greatest glory in the names of St. Peter and himself.

Entering Rome by the Porta Capena, the prisoners were conducted by their guard to headquarters, probably the camp of the Peregrini on the Caelian hill. Julius would no doubt commend St. Paul as a friend to the commandant, and that, combined with the favourable official report from Festus, would ensure his

good treatment. He was allowed to dwell in a house rented by himself, where friends might visit him. The chief burden of his captivity would be the constant presence of an armed soldier, to whom he was probably attached by a light chain. This must indeed have been a wearisome drag on his liberty and privacy night and day; but no doubt he took advantage of it to impart the Gospel to his guards, and with considerable success (p. 168).

At Rome, as elsewhere, St. Paul felt his first duty was to speak to the men of his own nation. He could not go to the synagogue, so he invited, three days after his arrival, the chief Jews in Rome to come to him. He began his address to them by stating, as often before, his own innocency of any disloyalty to Judaism, and his practical acquittal by his Roman judges. He had appealed to Caesar not to accuse the Jewish nation, but as the only way of vindicating himself against Jewish attack. Lastly, he repeated what he had said before Agrippa and Festus, "because of the hope of Israel, I am bound with this chain". The real question at issue was not merely personal; it concerned the fulfilment of the Old Testament promises and hopes.

The
Appeal
to Israel.

The Jews denied that any official report had been received from Judaea, or that any charges against St. Paul had been received privately from Jews coming to Rome. But they desired, they said, to hear a full statement from the Apostle, for they knew that Christianity was "everywhere spoken against".

A day was appointed for conference: the Jews arrived in large numbers, and the Apostle spoke to them "from morning till evening". His subject was "The Kingdom of God", a familiar conception to his hearers: and he spoke of Jesus as the Messiah, through whom this Kingdom had now been established. And he supported his arguments "both from the Law of Moses and from the prophets".

The effect was diverse, "some believed the things which were spoken and some disbelieved". It was a moment of decision and separation, like that at Antioch in Pisidia. St. Paul summed up in "one word" the general Jewish attitude in the words spoken of old to Isaiah, when he received his great commission.

“ Well spake the Holy Ghost by Isaiah the prophet unto your fathers, saying,

Go thou unto this people, and say,
By hearing ye shall hear, and shall in no wise understand ;
And seeing ye shall see, and shall in no wise perceive :
For this people's heart is waxed gross,
And their ears are dull of hearing,
And their eyes they have closed ;
Lest haply they should perceive with their eyes,
And hear with their ears,
And understand with their heart,
And should turn again,
And I should heal them.”

(Acts xxviii. 25-27).

It is a passage of deep spiritual and moral import. The Lord Himself had quoted it with regard to His own teaching (St. Matt. xiii. 14, 15), and St. John xii. 39, 40, uses it to sum up the great mystery of Israel's blindness to the Light. Israel had deliberately rejected the word of God ; and the punishment which followed, like all Divine judgments, was the withdrawal of grace. The attitude which Israel had taken up was allowed to go on unchecked to its natural conclusion. They began by refusing to hear : in the end they lost the power to hear. Like Pharaoh, they began by hardening their hearts, and in the end God hardened them.

What was the next stage ? Again the Scripture had foretold it. He quotes some words of Ps. lxvii. 2 ; this ‘ salvation of God ’ is sent “ unto the Gentiles ” : ‘ they will also hear ’. The Jews departed, their mouths full of controversy. The door was not indeed closed to them, for St. Paul continued to keep open house receiving “ all that went unto him ”.

For two years his captivity continued : “ the law's delay ” was evidently not unknown in imperial Rome. But he used the time “ preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness, none forbidding him ” (Acts xxviii. 31).

So ends St. Luke's record of his great master's career. The conclusion may seem abrupt, but it is artistic and significant. It was the natural climax of the preaching of the Gospel, for the

Apostle of the Gentiles to have free utterance in Rome. It is not unlikely that St. Luke may have contemplated a further book, dealing with St. Paul's later history, but there is no trace of its compilation. The remaining years of his life can only be guessed at by allusions in his later epistles, and a few vague traditions.

CHAPTER XV

THE EPISTLES OF THE CAPTIVITY

If a star were confined into a tomb,
Her captive flames must needs burn there ;
But when the hand that lock'd her up, gives room,
She'll shine through all the sphere.

H. VAUGHAN.

DURING his two years' captivity in Rome, St. Paul wrote four of the New Testament epistles, Philippians, Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon. The first of these belongs probably to the earlier part of the time. Its occasion was the coming of Epaphroditus, an envoy from the Philippian Church, who was the bearer of a personal gift to the Apostle, probably of money to supply his needs. St. Paul was, as a rule, extremely averse from receiving anything for himself, and the only exception he made was in the case of his beloved Philippians, who on two earlier occasions when he was in Thessalonica had similarly assisted him.

The circumstances of the foundation of the Philippian Church (p. 49) had perhaps especially endeared it to St. Paul. It was the first Church founded in Europe, as the direct result of the supernatural call to go over and help Macedonia. There he had suffered beating and imprisonment for Christ's sake ; and there the Gospel had won a notable triumph. St. Luke had been for some time left in charge of Philippi ; and judging by the epistle its condition was more promising than that of any other great Christian centre. *The Epistle to the Philippians* is couched in language of the warmest affection. There is nothing to blame and much to praise. The Philippians are "brethren beloved and longed for; my joy and crown". Unlike most of the letters of

St. Paul, this one does not deal primarily with any special question of Faith or practice, nor with the errors and shortcomings of those addressed. It is for the most part a letter of affectionate greeting, thanksgiving, and sympathy. Incidentally, however, as will be seen, it does touch upon large questions of doctrine, and also warns against possible errors within, or dangers from without. Epaphroditus on arriving at Rome had thrown himself with the greatest energy into the work of the Gospel and the task of ministering to St. Paul. The Apostle speaks of him in terms of high praise and affection. He is called 'brother and fellow-worker and fellow-soldier' and 'minister to my need'. But he overworked himself and fell into a dangerous sickness: "for the work of Christ he came nigh unto death, hazarding his life". He was evidently of a sensitive nature, for the burden of his illness was increased, St. Paul says, by the thought that the Philippians themselves had heard of it and were in distress. As soon as he was recovered, St. Paul decided to let him return and bear a letter to the Philippians. The Apostle had been intending to send Timothy, who had joined him in Rome, to get news of Philippi, as soon as he knew something definite as to the result of his trial before the Emperor. Timothy, he says, is the only one of his circle of friends who really shares his own affection for the Church of Philippi. Who the others were at this time we do not know, but the Apostle was not satisfied with their missionary zeal; "all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's". Meanwhile Epaphroditus would make the journey; he was longing to see again the friends who had sorrowed over his sickness, and the Apostle would be "the less sorrowful" at being able to get some message of affection through to the generous Philippians.

Such were the circumstances of the letter; its contents are not like a formal treatise, but run on in a natural flow, one thought suggesting another.

The epistle opens with an affectionate greeting from St. Paul and Timothy to "all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi with the bishops and deacons". [The word translated 'bishop', *episcopos* or overseer, has been used before (Acts xx. 28) of the 'Elders' of the Church. Clearly as yet it had not received its narrower and specific meaning

Epaphroditus.

St. Paul's joy in the Philippians.

of 'bishop'. The Apostles themselves during their lifetime were the principal rulers of the Church, and the titles of the three orders of the Christian ministry had not yet been fixed by common consent (see p. 35).] The Apostle thanks God for the common zeal of the Philippians in defending and furthering the Gospel and in their care for himself in prison. He prays for their spiritual progress, that love and knowledge may grow still more in them; that they may be preserved from sin, and be filled with the fruits of righteousness. He is confident, he says, that "he which began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ".

Now as to himself. All is well. All that has happened in his captivity has been for the furtherance of the Gospel. His imprisonment has spread the knowledge of Christ among the soldiers of the praetorian guard and elsewhere too. Those who are already Christian are being encouraged therefore to speak of their faith without fear. Not indeed that *all* the Christians in Rome are well disposed to him personally. Some are preaching Christ "of envy and strife", in a schismatic spirit intending to annoy the Apostle. (These were probably the Judaizing party.) Others are preaching of love and goodwill, and in hearty co-operation with St. Paul. What does it matter after all? "Every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is proclaimed: and therein I rejoice, yea, and will rejoice." His own object is simply this: That "Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death". Then follows his noble confession: "To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain". For himself death is better; he has "the desire to depart and be with Christ". But for the sake of those who love him and need his help, he is willing rather to live; and he is convinced that this for the present is what lies before him. All that he craves for is that the Philippians may live worthily of Christ, and stand fast for the faith, fronting their adversaries bravely. For they, too, he knows, like himself, have their battle to fight: "to you it hath been granted in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer in his behalf: having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me" (Phil. i. 29, 30).

Was there any special danger which threatened the spiritual life at Philippi? Apparently there was that very human and constant peril in the Church of selfish rivalry and disunion.

St. Paul's
own life
in Rome.

Against this he proceeds to warn them with peculiar and reiterated earnestness. By all that is dear to Christians : ' comfort in Christ ', the joy and love of Christian fellowship, the revelation of the Divine mercy and compassion, he entreats them to " be of the same mind, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind ; *doing* nothing through faction or through vainglory, but in lowliness of mind each counting other better than himself ; not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others " (Phil. ii. 2-4). The Philippian danger.

Then, in a remarkable passage, he rises to the highest of all appeals. The true Christian temper is connected immediately with the profoundest truths of the Incarnation :

" Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus : who, being in the form of God, counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men ; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient *even* unto death, yea, the death of the cross. Wherefore also God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name ; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven and *things* on earth and *things* under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father " (ib. 5-11). The Great Example.

This passage is naturally one of the fountain-heads of Christian theology. But it is most significant that the Apostle does not appear to be in any way stating a new truth concerning Christ, but simply appealing as a matter of course to what every Christian believed about Him. Christ is personally and essentially God and equal with the Father (' in the form of God ' implies possessing the essential attributes of God). The Incarnation was a voluntary act. By it He did not cease to be God, but put aside all the glory of Godhead and took the lowliest form and underwent the most humiliating sufferings. It was the supreme act of self-sacrifice for others ; and hence the name of humiliation, " Jesus ", has become " the Name " which demands the adoring worship of the universe.

This then is the ideal the Apostle sets before the Philippians.

To have the mind of Christ is no easy thing. It needs labour and humility, and it needs the grace of God. In a remarkable paradox St. Paul sets forth the two sides of Christian endeavour, the two opposites which life rather than logic harmonises :

“ Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling ; for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to work, for his good pleasure ” (ii. 12, 13).

The Philippians have their perils, too, from without. There are the constant attacks from the Judaizers. Turning upon these the opprobrious words which they used of the Gentiles, Christ our only Confidence. he warns, “ Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers ”, *i.e.* of those whose earnest activities are only for evil ends, “ beware of the concision ”, *i.e.* of those who trust for salvation to a mere mutilation of the flesh. Christian confidence is not in external observances but in Christ. He illustrates this from his own example. He, if any one, might trust in these Jewish observances : “ circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews ; as touching the law, a Pharisee ; as touching zeal, persecuting the church ; as touching the righteousness which is in the law, found blameless ” (Phil. iii. 5, 6).

But all such claims he counts as mere loss and refuse in comparison with the knowledge of Christ. His life is not now like that of the self-complacent Jew who trusts in his own legal righteousness. A great ideal, nothing less than to be conformed to Christ Himself, a hope which calls for unceasing endeavour, the desire of the resurrection-life—these are worth all else.

“ That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, becoming conformed unto his death ; if by any means I may attain unto the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained, or am already made perfect : but I press on, if so be that I may apprehend that for which also I was apprehended by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself yet to have apprehended : but one thing *I do*, forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus ” (*ib.* 10-14).

But there is another peril threatening the Philippians—the error of those who are making Christian liberty into an excuse

for easy, sensual living. "For many walk, of whom I told you often, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are* the enemies of the cross of Christ : whose end is perdition, whose god is the belly, and *whose* glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things" (*ib.* 18, 19).

Moral
Perils.

Christians have been set free from the Law that they may live the life of heaven even here. Their happiness is to be found not in the gratification of earthly desires, but in the resurrection life. "For our citizenship¹ is in heaven ; from whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ : who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, *that it may be* conformed to the body of his glory, according to the working whereby he is able even to subject all things unto himself" (*ib.* 20, 21).

The prevailing note of the epistle is joy. The word 'rejoice' is constantly repeated. The Apostle speaks, too, of his own joy. The spiritual progress, the love and faith of the Philippians fill up the measure of his happiness. "Even", he says, "if I am poured out like a libation upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all." He is conscious that he is repeating himself, as he reiterates "rejoice"—but "to write the same things to you to me indeed is not irksome, but for you it is safe".

Joy and
Peace.

This atmosphere of joy in Christ ought to have its effect both on the outside world, and on the inner life of the Philippians themselves. "Let your gentleness be known unto all men". . . 'in nothing be anxious'—commit all your needs in prayer to God ; "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus". It is a beautiful picture of the calm and sweetness of the Christian life, which reaches its deepest and most penetrating appeal in the wonderful words which seem to gather together all that is highest in the possibilities of human thought as the heritage of the Christian.

"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honourable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report ; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things" (*iv.* 8).

¹ A significant word to use to the Philippians, so proud of their Roman privileges (see pp. 50, etc.).

There are a few personal allusions. Two Christian ladies evidently had need of the Apostle's exhortations to peace and unity. "I exhort Euodia, and I exhort Syntyche, to be of the same mind in the Lord." We do not know to whom this affectionate charge is given :

"I beseech thee also, true yoke-fellow, help these women, for they laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow-workers, whose names are in the book of life" (*ib.* 3).

It may be St. Luke. Perhaps he was once more at Philippi for a time. He could scarcely be at Rome, or the Apostle would not have spoken as he did of having no one with him who took a genuine interest in the Philippians.

He now thanks the Philippians for the gift which Epaphroditus had brought, which he values most for the feelings of love which prompted it; he calls it "an odour of a sweet smell" (like the incense of the Temple), "a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God". It will redound to the blessing of the givers. "My God shall fulfil every need of yours." As for himself, he has learned, "in whatsoever state I am, therein to be content. I know how to be abased, and I know also how to abound: in everything and in all things have I learned the secret both to be filled and to be hungry, both to abound and to be in want. I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me" (*ib.* 11-13).

No salutations by name are sent—but the general greeting from all with which the epistle closes has the interesting addition, "especially they that are of Cæsar's household". Christ had His people already even in the Palace itself. The seed was germinating, the leaven working.

The Philippians are not again mentioned in New Testament: but probably St. Paul visited them again. In the next century a further interest is given to their Church by the letter addressed to them by the great martyr, St. Polycarp of Smyrna.

The Epistle to the Ephesians probably comes next in order. There is some MS. uncertainty as to the address of the letter, and this, combined with the absence of personal greetings, favours the supposition that it is really a circular letter addressed to the Asiatic Churches, and intended to be passed from one to another, and read in their assemblies for worship.

It is much more of a theological treatise or instruction than the previous epistle. The first three chapters develop the main thesis, the 'mystery' of the Church Universal. In the fourth chapter this passes into practical exhortation on the different duties and relationships of the Christian life as lived in the Church.

The essential unity of the Church, and its catholicity, had been before this a part of St. Paul's teaching. They are implicit in the instruction he had given the Corinthians as to the Church being "the body of Christ" in which each individual Christian, whether Jew or Gentile, bond or free is a "member". It is true that the local congregations of Christians are called "Churches". But these had always in the mind of St. Paul (as with all other New Testament writers) been co-ordinated under the conception of 'one Church'. Now, perhaps under the influence of the great spectacle of the unity and organisation of the Roman Empire, as viewed from Rome itself, the Apostle unfolds the full conception of "the Church" as a "mystery", *i.e.* as part of God's revelation, and therefore (as it appears in the Creed) as an article of faith.

This doctrine of the Church begins with the assertion of God's eternal will and purpose. God has chosen us Christians in Christ "before the foundation of the world", to be holy; to be redeemed and forgiven through the blood of Christ; to be adopted as his 'sons'. And this purpose, in its widest meaning, "to sum up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens, and the things upon the earth" (Eph. i. 10) can only find its fulfilment in the unity of the Church.

Christians are men and women of the future. The fulness of their inheritance is not yet realised; though they have received the 'earnest' or first-fruits of it by the endowment of the Spirit, "the holy Spirit of promise" with which they had been "sealed" (an allusion to the specific gift of the Spirit through Baptism and the laying on of hands). Hence the Apostle prays that those to whom he writes may rise by the illuminating gifts of the Spirit, "wisdom, revelation, knowledge", to learn more and more of the greatness of this "inheritance", the riches of its glory, its illimitable possibilities of power. For this power (already working in Christians) is nothing less than that might of God which raised Christ from the dead, and has set Him upon the throne of the

The
Mystery
of the
Church.

Unity.

universe, "far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come : and he put all things in subjection under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all " (*ib.* 21-23).

Contrast this dazzling prospect of redeemed humanity with the previous condition of all men before God's grace has brought them into union with Christ. All alike were 'dead city. through trespasses and sins', all were under the dominion of Satan, all were the slaves of natural lusts, all were "children of wrath", *i.e.* under God's displeasure. But "God being rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loves us", has raised us up to life from this condition of moral death, raised us up even to heaven itself in Christ.

This is true of Jews and Gentiles alike : but the Gentiles have, as the Apostle reminds them, special need to remember their own lost condition ; "separate from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of the promise, having no hope and without God in the world " (Eph. ii. 12).

But those who were so "far off" have now been "made nigh". The "wall of partition" which separated Gentile and Jew has been broken down ; peace has been made, and Jew and Gentile are reconciled to God "in one body" : each has received the same Spirit and has a free approach to the same Father. What has worked so mighty a change ? The Cross, the blood of Christ ; these have 'slain the enmity', made peace between man and God, peace between Jew and Gentile. The thought of the Temple with its veils cutting off man from access to God, with its walled courts strictly marking the separation between Israel and the Gentiles, carries the Apostle on to the grand conception of a more glorious Temple where the stones are living souls, the Church where God Himself may dwell :

"So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone ; in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy

temple in the Lord ; in whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God in the Spirit " (*ib.* ii. 19-22).

This is the 'mystery' of the Church, revealed directly to St. Paul, as to the other "apostles and prophets", unknown in past ages, but now disclosed, "that the Gentiles are fellow-heirs, and fellow-members of the body, and fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the Gospel" (iii. 6).

These truths are "the unsearchable riches of Christ" which St. Paul claims it to be his commission to declare to all men. Not men only, but the higher beings who inhabit other worlds than this are now learning what was in the mind of God from the beginning, "to the intent that now unto the principalities and the powers in the heavenly *places* might be made known through the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (iii. 10, 11).

This eloquent and glorious picture concludes with a prayer, addressed to the Father, "from Whom every fatherhood in heaven and earth is named", that this illimitable power of the Spirit in the Church may have its full working in all Christians individually and collectively, "that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; to the end that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be strong to apprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled unto all the fulness of God" (*ib.* 17-19).

From this soaring vision, the Apostle passes to practical duties. "I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beseech you to walk worthily of the calling wherewith ye were called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (iv. 1-3).

This exhortation flows directly from the nature of the Church itself, her unity, her sacraments, her relationship to God. "*There is one body, and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all*" (*ib.* 4-6).

The Apostle now proceeds in remarkable words to develop the same lesson which he had given to the Corinthians, of the

individual value, the individual endowment—of every member of the Church. The ascended Christ of whom it was foretold that in His triumph He would “give gifts unto men” (Ps. lxxviii.), has bestowed his measure of grace to each man: ‘some’ He has made “apostles, some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers”. The purpose of the work of all is one and the same, the perfecting of redeemed humanity: “till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (*ib.* 13).

This will mean to man on his intellectual side deliverance from doubt and vain speculations. We are “no longer children, tossed to and fro, carried about with every wind of doctrine”.
 The Christian Life. On the moral side, the inference is no less clear. We are delivered from the moral failure of heathenism. Blindness, alienation from the life of God had led to the practice of “all uncleanness with greediness”. All is changed: “Ye did not so learn Christ”; the ‘old man’ is put away, our whole attitude is altered. Put on “the new man” which after God hath been created in righteousness and holiness of truth”. Here as elsewhere St. Paul points out the deepest and most effectual motive for moral purity: a new relationship to God which has begun in Baptism, and which involves also a new relationship to one’s brother man. He now proceeds (*iv.* 25) to work out this in the consideration of moral duties. First as to the sins which are plainly inconsistent with our common membership in the body of Christ: “Wherefore, putting away falsehood, speak ye truth each one with his neighbour: for we are members one of another” (*iv.* 25). Excessive anger may easily bring the Christian again into the power of the devil. Make up quarrels at once: “Let not the sun go down upon your wrath”. Stealing again is to be abandoned. The thief must learn to labour, and to give of the fruits of his labour to the needy. The tongue must be bridled. Evil words will “grieve the Holy Spirit of God”: “Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and railing, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, even as God also in Christ forgave you” (*ib.* 31, 32).

The strongest warning of all is given against the sins which had

so corrupted the society and the literature of the heathen world, and which, however they might be glossed over, were bringing upon it the wrath of God : " But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as becometh saints ; nor filthiness, nor foolish talking, or jesting, which are not befitting : but rather giving of thanks. For this ye know of a surety, that no fornicator, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, which is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no man deceive you with empty words : for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the sons of disobedience " (v. 3-6).

All such are " unfruitful works of darkness ", and are utterly inconsistent with the ' light ' into which Christians have entered, and whose fruit is ' all goodness and righteousness and truth '.

The Christian life therefore is no easy matter : " look carefully how ye walk, . . . redeeming the time, because the days are evil ". But it is no life of gloom or mere restriction. Its joy will not be that which springs for the moment out of sensual gratifications : " Be not drunken with wine, wherein is riot ". It will be the fruit of the indwelling Holy Spirit. The Christian's mouth will be full of song : he will live in an atmosphere of thanksgiving and mutual courtesies : " Speaking one to another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord ; giving thanks always for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father ; subjecting yourselves one to another in the fear of Christ " (v. 19-21).

This last thought leads directly to the consideration of the different social relationships, which, founded as they are in the facts of human nature, have all been made new in Christ.

Marriage is transformed. It is a great Christian " mystery ". It is a revelation of the nature of the Church. In the loving union of man and woman is seen the union of Christ and His Church. The natural headship of the husband corresponds to the supremacy of Christ Himself : " As the Church is subject to Christ, so let the wives also be to their husbands in everything (v. 24). On the other hand, the husband is bound to imitate towards his wife that tender care and affection and self-sacrifice which the Lord Himself displays towards His Church.

"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself up for it; that He might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word, that he might present the Church to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. Even so ought husbands also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his own wife loveth himself: for no man ever hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as Christ also the Church (*ib.* 25-29).

No higher and nobler ideal of marriage can be conceived than this. It is one of the greatest gifts of Christianity to the world; and that it is presented by the Apostle who extols virginity as the better way is a remarkable proof not only of his width of mind, but of his inspiration.

Children and parents find a new meaning of their relationship "in the Lord" (cf. iii. 15). The old commandment, "Honour thy father and mother", is repeated: St. Paul finds in it a special fitness for the Christian family, for it is "the first commandment with *promise*". But parents while they bring up their children with strictness "in the Lord", *i.e.* as disciplined Christians, must shew the gentleness and respect for a child which are so eminently like the behaviour of the Lord Himself towards children—"provoke not your children to wrath" (cf. Col. iii. 21, "that they be not discouraged").

Servants, who come next under the Apostle's view, would be for the most part simply *slaves* (see p. 181). But whatever their legal or social position, Christianity has already raised them to that of responsible agents, "servants of Christ", who can be appealed to from the side of conscience, "the heart". And this transforms all their earthly service; it must be obedient, respectful, conscientious, "not with eye-service as men pleasers"; and in this at least like free service, that it can look forward to a reward; "with good will doing service, as unto the Lord, and not unto men: knowing that whatsoever good thing each one doeth, the same shall he receive again from the Lord, whether *he be* bond or free" (vi. 7, 8).

Christian masters, too, though they are not enjoined to free their slaves, must treat them in the same spirit, as being with

them servants of a common master; "masters, do the same things unto them, and forbear threatening: knowing that both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no respect of persons with him" (*ib.* 9).

The epilogue (vi. 10, etc.) is remarkable, and from two points of view shew St. Paul's skill and insight in drawing lessons from his surroundings. He finds himself in the midst of the military atmosphere of Rome—and no moment of the day is spent without the presence of a soldier, whose armour and weapons he has evidently been studying. The strength and organisation of the Roman legions lead him to think of the vastness and terrible import of the Christian conflict. It is not waged really against Jewish conspirators or Roman officials, but against a world-army of the spiritual power of evil, whose opposition is drawing to a head. "For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*. Wherefore take up the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand" (vi. 10-13).

The
Christian
Warfare.

And what this 'armour of God' is to be he finds plainly suggested in the panoply of the legionary who stands warder over him: "Stand, therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; withal taking up the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the evil *one*. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (*ib.* 14-17).

But there is one other all-prevailing weapon, for which he can find no type in his soldier's equipment, "with all prayer and supplication praying at all seasons in the Spirit, and watching thereunto in all perseverance and supplication for all the saints" (*ib.* 18).

In these prayers he asks especially for intercession for himself in his strange and paradoxical position of being "an ambassador in chains", that he may have courage and eloquence to "make known the mystery of the Gospel".

Lastly he commends to his readers the bearer of this letter, Tychicus, no mere messenger, but "the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord". He will add his own comments and consolation. The closing words are characteristic of the Apostle's own deep sincerity and personal love for the Lord. "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in uncorruptness".

The Epistle to the Colossians. This letter must have been written at the same time, and dispatched along with that to the 'Ephesians', for the same messenger Tychicus, is commended, almost in the same words. And although its doctrinal purpose is different, the practical exhortations cover the same ground, and are often almost verbally identical.

Colossae was an important town in Phrygia (within the province of 'Asia'), on the high road from Ephesus to the Euphrates, in the valley of the Lycus. Near it were two Colossae.

other towns, Laodicea and Hierapolis. Each of these had its congregation of Christians; but none of them directly of St. Paul's foundation. He had not apparently ever visited them, they "had not seen his face in the flesh". But he took an intense interest in them, having been visited at Rome by Epaphras, a Colossian, probably the founder of their Christianity, and their bishop.

If the epistle to the Ephesians is especially the epistle of the Church, that to the Colossians deals pre-eminently with Christ Himself. It is the fullest and deepest statement of the doctrine of the Person of Christ which St. Paul ever wrote, and one which is essentially in harmony with the Christology of St. John. The special circumstances of Colossian Christianity called for this statement. Epaphras had indeed spoken warmly of Colossian faith and love and zeal. The opening words of the epistle record this with thankfulness. But he had also reported a special danger to which his converts were exposed, through an imperfect grasp of the Faith and the insinuations of false teachers.

What was the error which threatened Colossae? It was akin on one side to Judaism; for it was seeking to lay on these Gentile converts burdens of Jewish circumcision, holy days, distinctions of food. But it had another element in it, which soon after was to appear as a dangerous enemy to the Church in the different systems of the Gnostics. Among

The
Colossian
Danger.

the chief features of Gnosticism were the affectation of a superior and mystical 'knowledge'; the belief that matter and created things were essentially evil, and the conclusion that there could be no connection between God and the world, except indirectly through angelic mediation, or through some impersonal aeons or emanations from God. On its practical side Gnosticism denied the possibility of the consecration of human life and human desires. Matter was evil, and therefore one must either practise the strictest abstinence or else treat all indulgence as indifferent, and gratify desires as a matter of course. All these Gnostic tendencies, coloured by Judaism, seem hinted at in this epistle. It has been often thought that the Colossians were being influenced by the Essenes, a Jewish sect who professed a secret knowledge and practised extreme asceticism. But more probably these tendencies were widely spread in the East and were appearing independently among the Colossians, whose Phrygian home was always noted for its strange and fantastic phases of religion.

To all these errors a true knowledge of Christ is the one and sufficient answer. The Colossians, as St. Paul reminds them, in his opening passage, have already entered into Christ's Kingdom, and have found through His Blood the forgiveness of sins. But who is Christ? He is not only the Redeemer and the Head of the Church; He is the one and only mediator between God and the universe, because He is, in His essential nature even apart from the Incarnation, the Creator and the sustainer of all created things, "who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; ¹ for in him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through him, and unto him; and he is before all things, and in him all things consist" (Col. i. 15-17).

The Fullness of Christ.

This stupendous conception of the eternal pre-existence and Godhead of Jesus Christ is the same which St. John has expressed in his teaching of "the Word", and it underlies all the Catholic doctrine of the Incarnation.² And because Christ is all this in

¹ The Greek implies the priority of the Son to all creation, not that He is in any sense a creature Himself.

² On this most important subject, see Lightfoot's *Colossians*, Introd. iii., and Dale's *Atonement*, Sect. 1, from which the following striking passage is

His own nature ; by becoming man, He is both the Head of the Church His body, and the one reconciler of creation to God.

“ And he is the head of the body, the church : who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead ; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it was the good pleasure of the Father that in him should all the fulness dwell ; and through him to reconcile all things unto himself, having made peace through the blood of his cross ; through him, *I say*, whether things upon the earth, or things in the heavens ” (*ib.* 1, 18-20).

In this great reconciliation the Colossians as Christians now share, though once “ alienated and enemies ”. What they need for their perfection is not any mystical or magical so-called ‘ knowledge ’ which their false teachers might pretend to give them, but to be established in the faith, to grow in understanding of Christ, “ in whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden ”.

Nor do they need to be bound by the hard and fast ascetic and Jewish rules and restrictions which these teachers were trying to introduce. Such things are “ after the rudiments of the world ”, *i.e.* the mere elementary rules of the childhood of mankind (*cf.* Gal. iv. 3). In learning Christ, the Colossians have entered into a grander inheritance ; “ for in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and in him ye are made full, who is the head of all principality and power ” (*ii.* 9, 10). They do not need Jewish circumcision, for they have received “ the circumcision of Christ ”, *i.e.* Baptism, in which they have been “ buried with Him ” to the old heathenism, and have received a new life and the full forgiveness of all sins, for Christ by His Cross has triumphed over all the powers of evil.

quoted : “ The great words of St. Paul (Col. i. 16, 17) give us a glimpse of vast and fruitful provinces of truth which are almost unknown to us. They have been traversed from time to time by the solitary path of adventurous speculation, but the Church has never made her home there ; the golden harvests are unreaped ; not even a wandering sect has pitched its tents and fed its flocks on those rich and boundless plains. They belong to a remote and glorious realm lying far beyond the frontiers of familiar truth— . . . All things were created ‘ in Him ’, ‘ by Him ’, ‘ for Him ’, ‘ in Him all things consist ’—These wonderful words are still ‘ dark with excess of light ’. They affirm the existence and define the character of relations between the Divine personality of the Lord Jesus and the universe, which we have never been able to grasp, but a clear conception of these relations is indispensable to a satisfactory theory of the Atonement ”.

Hence they are under no obligation to observe Jewish ceremonies and days. "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a feast day or a new moon or a sabbath day¹ which are a shadow of the things to come; but the body is Christ's" (*ib.* 16, 17). Those who have got the reality can let the shadows go. So too he warns them against "a voluntary humility", *i.e.* a self-imposed asceticism, and "worshipping of angels" (seen in imaginary 'visions', v. 18, R.V.), as if we needed such mediators between God and ourselves. Christ is sufficient.

And what of the practical conduct of the Christian life? Christian morality does not consist in a slavery to hard and fast rules and restrictions: "Touch not, taste not, handle not". Such rules may have a fine appearance, "a show of wisdom", but they are of no real value even in subduing the desires of the flesh (see R.V. of Col. ii. 23). Christian morality is a grander thing. It is a new life, a transformation of character, it is a sharing of the Resurrection of Christ. "If then ye were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth. For ye died, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, *who is* our life, shall be manifested, then shall ye also with him be manifested in glory" (Col. iii. 1-4).

The
Christian
Life.

Here we have the real motive and power for a holy life. On one side it will mean not the restriction by rules, but the putting to death of the old life of sin: "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, the which is idolatry" (*ib.* 8). And not only these, but such things also as "anger, wrath, malice, railing, shameful speaking", are to be put away. And on the positive side there is the call to a new life of active goodness in that great society of universal brotherhood, the Church: "Ye have

¹ A sabbath day. It is perfectly clear that St. Paul regards the Gentiles as under no obligation to observe the Jewish "sabbath". The first day of the week was *their* holy day of worship, though of course it could not be observed as a day of rest from work, until the secular government, turning Christian, ordered it to be so. This was first enacted by Constantine in 321. Nor was it apparently till then that the Sunday came to be generally regarded as the Christian "Sabbath", and its observance connected with the Fourth Commandment.

put on the new man, which is being renewed unto knowledge after the image of him that created him : where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bondman, freeman : but Christ is all, and in all " (*ib.* 10, 11). Hence the Christian life must be full of graces and virtues unknown to heathenism : " Put on therefore, as God's elect, holy and beloved, a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering ; forbearing one another, and forgiving each other, if any man have a complaint against any ; even as the Lord forgave you, so also do ye : and above all these things *put on* love, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to the which also ye were called in one body ; and be ye thankful " (*ib.* 12-15).

From this point the Apostle goes on to repeat in a condensed form the instructions he had given to 'the Ephesians' as to the duty of Christian joy and thanksgiving, the new consecration of the married state, the family life, the relation of masters and servants and the duty of intercessory prayer. And Christian life must aim at a definite influence on surrounding heathenism. " Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time. Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer each one " (Col. iv. 5, 6).

The epilogue commends Tychicus, the bearer of the letter, and Onesimus, " the faithful and beloved brother " (concerning whom a separate letter was being sent). The salutations of

Greetings. St. Paul's Roman companions follow : there are with him three Jewish Christians : Aristarchus, " my fellow-prisoner " ; Mark, " the cousin of Barnabas " ; and Jesus Justus (otherwise unknown). The allusion to Mark is interesting : he is the John Mark of the Acts (pp. 21, etc.), otherwise St. Mark the evangelist. It is clear that the breach between him and St. Paul was now healed. The latter had, he says, already given instructions about John Mark : " if he come unto you, receive him ". There are also three Gentile fellow-workers : Epaphras, the Colossian ; " Luke, the beloved physician " ; and Demas ; to these of course must be added Timothy.

Salutations are sent to the neighbouring Church of Laodicea, to Nymphas (or Nympha, a lady), in whose house the congregation met, and to Archippus, who was apparently their bishop : " Take

heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it". One other interesting direction illustrates the use of these letters, and probably explains 'the Epistle' in the service of the Eucharist: "And when this epistle hath been read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye also read the epistle from Laodicea".

This Laodicean epistle is perhaps 'Ephesian' (see p. 168).

The Epistle to Philemon. This is a short personal letter addressed to one who had been converted by St. Paul. He was a resident of Colossae, and in his house the Christian congregation met. One of his family, probably his son, Archippus, has already appeared in Col. iv. 17.

The subject of this letter is Onesimus, a slave of Philemon's, who had run away from him, apparently at the same time helping himself to some of his master's property. He had made his way to Rome, and in some unknown way had come under St. Paul's influence. By him he was converted and baptized, and he attached himself to the Apostle, who for his part conceived a warm affection for him. Onesimus.

But it was no part of the Gospel to stir up a social revolution by encouraging slaves to rebel against their masters. The abolition of slavery must come in due course, as it did, from within, as Christians came to realise the value and the equality of each human soul in Christ. But for the present, by Roman law, Onesimus was guilty of theft: he had robbed his master of his goods, and of his own services. He must make restitution, it would be a proof—the clearest proof he could give—of the sincerity of his conversion. So the Apostle bids Onesimus go back to his master, and with him he sends this letter, which has been universally admired for its taste, its tact, and its affection.

After greeting in Timothy's name and his own, Philemon, Apphia, his wife (?), and Archippus, the Apostle proceeds to speak with joy and thankfulness of Philemon's faith, and his sympathy and help to his fellow-Christians. St. Paul's Request. He has a request to make of him in which he will appeal to love, rather than to authority. Onesimus (the name means 'useful') had in the past proved 'unprofitable'. But he has become St. Paul's own spiritual child by his conversion. He is now indeed 'profitable' to both; to the Apostle, for he had

ministered to him " in the bonds of the Gospel ", and to Philemon, to whom now he is returning, for he comes " no longer as a servant, but more than a servant, a brother beloved ". Will not Philemon receive him kindly for St. Paul's sake ? " If then thou countest me a partner, receive him as myself. But if he hath wronged thee at all, or oweth thee ought, put that to mine account ; I, Paul, write it with mine own hand, I will repay it : that I say not unto thee how that thou owest to me even thine own self besides " (Philem. 17-19). He does not ask that Onesimus may be set free, but that he may be forgiven and received as a Christian. There is no record of the effect of the letter, but Philemon must have been very different to what St. Paul thought him, if he could resist such an appeal.

These great letters of the Roman imprisonment practically complete St. Paul's teaching on the Person and work of Jesus Christ. Beginning, as we have seen, by proclaiming Him to the Jews as the Messiah and the fulfiller of prophecy, and the Son of God, he has gone on to describe him to the Romans and the Corinthians as the Redeemer and the Second Adam, the new head of the human race and its final Judge ; to the Philippians as the co-equal Son humbling himself in the Incarnation ; to the Ephesians as the exalted Head of the Church ; to the Colossians as the Creator, the Upholder and the Restorer of the Universe ; the Alpha and the Omega of creation. And everywhere these profound conceptions of theology are warmed and quickened by the sense of a personal relation to Jesus as the Saviour and the Lover of Souls.

Christo-
logy of the
Epistles.

CHAPTER XVI

THE PASTORAL EPISTLES

Where can Thy seal be found
But on the chosen seed, from age to age
By Thine anointed heralds duly crown'd
As kings and priests Thy war to wage ?

Then fearless walk we forth,
Yet full of trembling, messengers of God ;
Our warrant sure, but doubting of our worth,
By our own shame alike and glory aw'd.

J. KEBLE.

AT the end of the two years' imprisonment in Rome St. Paul was apparently acquitted and released. Only tradition and the allusions in the three latest epistles (i. and ii. Timothy and Titus) throw any light on the remainder of his life. It seems probable that he first made a journey westward, in fulfilment of his long intention to visit Spain (Rom. xv. 24). Early Roman tradition is in favour of this. St. Clement of Rome in the first century says that he went " to the utmost limit of the West ". He then turned to the East again, perhaps travelling by Philippi and Troas, and making some stay at Ephesus. He may have gone as far inland in Asia Minor as the Churches of the Lycus valley. (In writing to Philemon he had asked him to " prepare him a lodging ".) When he left Ephesus he entrusted that important church to the care of his well-trusted Timothy, the companion of his Roman imprisonment. Some time after this he addressed to Timothy the first of the group of letters called ' Pastoral ', because they deal chiefly with the work of the ministers and pastors of the Church.

1. *Timothy*. This letter has the natural discursiveness of a

personal epistle : there are frequent digressions, and to summarise is not easy. But three main purposes may be distinguished :

(1) To encourage Timothy in his work ; (2) to warn him against growing heresies and dangers ; (3) to give him practical instruction as to the government of the Church.

After the opening salutation to Timothy, " my true child in faith ", and the wish of " grace, mercy and peace ", the Apostle reminds him of the purpose for which he has been left at Ephesus. The Church was being threatened by false teachers, who are clearly Jewish but with a strain of Gnostic superstition (such as might readily be expected from Acts xix. 13-19). Timothy is to " charge certain men not to teach a different doctrine, neither to give heed to fables and endless genealogies, the which minister questionings, rather than a dispensation of God which is in faith " (1 Tim. i. 3, 4).

In contrast with all such wordy controversy, the Christian life is essentially simple : " the end of the charge is love out of a pure heart and a good conscience and faith unfeigned " (*ib.* 5). The thought of " the gospel of the glory of the blessed God " leads St. Paul to speak here with characteristic feeling and humility of his own conversion :

" I thank him that enabled me, *even* Christ Jesus our Lord, for that he counted me faithful, appointing me to *his* service ; though I was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious : howbeit I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief ; and the grace of our Lord abounded exceedingly with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. Faithful is the saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners ; of whom I am chief " (*ib.* 12-15).

He exhorts Timothy to " war the good warfare, holding faith and a good conscience ". Christian prophecy has already pointed out Timothy for this work ; and he ought to be warned by the example of some who have " made shipwreck ", especially two, Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom St. Paul has excommunicated (" delivered unto Satan ").

Some practical instructions follow. First there is the call to intercessory prayer : " I exhort therefore, first of all, that supplications, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings, be made for all

men ; for kings and all that are in high place ; that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and gravity" (1 Tim. i. 1, 2).

This suggests a short digression on the universality of the Gospel—"God our Saviour willeth that all men should be saved"—and on the central truth of the faith: "There is one God, one mediator also between God and men, *himself* man, Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all" (*ib.* 5, 6).

Intercession is pre-eminently a suitable work for the male members of the Church; 'the men' are to pray everywhere, "lifting up holy hands without wrath and disputing". Men and women in the Church. Women had perhaps already begun to claim an unseemly prominence. They are somewhat sternly reminded of the need of self-suppression: "that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefastness and sobriety; not with braided hair, and gold or pearls or costly raiment; but (which becometh women professing godliness) through good works. Let a woman learn in quietness with all subjection. But I permit not a woman to teach, nor to have dominion over a man, but to be in quietness" (*ib.* 9-12).

One of Timothy's great duties would be to choose and ordain the 'bishops' or elders of the Church. The standard required for this office is a high one, both for the sake of the Church, of the public opinion of the surrounding heathen, and of the man himself: The choosing of Presbyters.

"The bishop therefore must be without reproach, the husband of one wife,¹ temperate, soberminded, orderly, given to hospitality, apt to teach; no brawler, no striker; but gentle, not contentious, no lover of money; one that ruleth well his own house, having *his* children in subjection with all gravity; (but if a man knoweth not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) not a novice,² lest being puffed up he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover he must have good testimony from them that are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snares of the devil"³ (*iii.* 2-7).

So again with the subordinate office of the deacon.

"Deacons in like manner *must be* grave, not doubletongued,

¹ *I.e.* he must not have been twice married.

² *I.e.* one who has only recently been baptized.

³ *I.e.* pride.

not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre ; holding the
 Deacons. mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. . . . Let
 deacons be husbands of one wife, ruling *their* children
 and their own houses well " (*ib.* 8, 9, 12).

There were also female deacons or deaconesses (verse 11)
 (A.V. is wrong in representing these as the wives of the deacons).
 They are to be "grave, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all
 things".

These instructions St. Paul says he gives to Timothy in order
 that if his absence is prolonged, the latter may know how he
 ought to live "in the house of God, which is the Church
 The Mystery of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth".
 of the Church and her This remarkable statement adds something to the
 life. teaching of the epistle to the Ephesians respecting the
 Church. The witness of the Church, *i.e.* of the corporate Christian
 experience and conscience, is the authority and support of the
 Christian Faith. Upon it both the Bible and the Creed ultimately
 rest.

The life of the Church (and here St. Paul seems to be quoting
 from some Christian hymn) consists in her union with Jesus
 Christ. "Great", he says, "is the mystery of godliness", *i.e.* of
 the new life of holiness and filial affection towards God ; that
 mystery, that life is Christ Himself :

Who ¹ was manifested in the flesh :
 Justified in the spirit : ²
 Seen of angels :
 Preached among the nations :
 Believed on in the world :
 Received up in glory.

He passes from this thought of the definiteness of "the faith"
 in Christ to speak of a direct revelation he has received from the
 Holy Spirit that some would prove disloyal. The error
 Future heresies he foresees seems to be something like that which had
 foretold. threatened the Colossians, a false asceticism based on
 the idea that matter is evil, in contrast with the great Christian

¹ The reading "God", though true enough doctrinally, does not rest upon
 sufficient MS. authority.

² Cf. Rom. i. 4 ; "the Spirit" is probably Christ's Divine nature, by the
 power of which He was proved righteous, "justified"; or it may mean the
 Holy Spirit as sanctifying His human nature.

belief in the unity of all creation and its redemption by the Incarnation ; “ forbidding to marry,¹ *and commanding* to abstain from meats ² which God created to be received with thanksgiving by them that believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be rejected, if it be received with thanksgiving : for it is sanctified through the word of God and prayer ” (1 Tim. iv. 3-5).

The personal exhortation to Timothy with which chapter iv. concludes is a model of instruction for the ministerial life in all times.

“ Let no man despise thy youth ; but be thou an ensample to them that believe, in word, in manner of life, in love, in faith, in purity. Till I come, give heed to reading, to exhortation, to teaching. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.³ Be diligent in these things, give thyself wholly to them ; that thy progress may be manifest unto all. Take heed to thyself, and to thy teaching. Continue in these things : for in doing this thou shalt save both thyself and them that hear thee ” (iv. 12-16).

Especially should be noted here, as in other places, the plain reference to an act of Ordination, by the laying on of hands, conferring a definite spiritual endowment (cf. 2 Tim. i. 6).

The next chapter (v.) resumes the thread of practical instruction in the pastoral care of the Church. Timothy is to consider the Church as one family and treat them accordingly : “ Rebuke not an elder,⁴ but exhort him as a father ; the younger men as brethren : the elder women as mothers ; the younger as sisters, in all purity ” (v. 1, 2).

The early Church was remarkable for its charitable care for widows ; and from the instructions that follow on this subject,

¹ Not an allusion to voluntary celibacy for Christ's sake, which is elsewhere commended, but to the Gnostic idea that marriage and child-bearing are essentially evil. Ch. iii. 15.

² Similarly, this is not a condemnation of Christian fasting, but of the Gnostic theory of the evil of matter as the ground for an ascetic life.

³ The ‘ presbytery ’ means the whole body of elders who were associated with St. Paul in the act of Ordination, just as now all the priests present, as well as the ordaining bishop, lay their hands on the head of the candidate for the priesthood.

⁴ Not a ‘ presbyter ’, but simply here ‘ an aged man ’.

The
roll of
widows.

it is clear that already quite a definite organisation for this purpose existed. And its possible abuses were already being discovered. Selfish and insincere people might take advantage of such an organised charity, to get rid of the responsibility of maintaining widows in their own family. Or a woman might be left a widow while she was still young, and while being maintained by the Church, be living a worldly and frivolous life, or be on the lookout for a second husband. Or widows might be claimants for Church charity and recognition, whose life and conduct did not really justify such a position being given them.

In all these cases the instruction of St. Paul is clear and practical. Widows who have relations, children, or nephews, must be relieved by them : the Church must not be charged : " if any provideth not for his own, and specially his own household, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever " (*ib.* 8).

Young widows are not to be encouraged, by receiving free maintenance, in the characteristic faults of the idle woman. They must marry again and take up household duties. The dangers of the unoccupied widow are sketched by a master hand : " And withal they learn also *to be* idle, going about from house to house ; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not " (*ib.* 13).

The spirit of true widowhood is thus described : " Now she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, hath her hope set on God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day " (*ib.* 5). And the following are to be counted the qualifications for enrolment in the Church's list of " widows ".

" Let none be enrolled as a widow under threescore years old, *having been* the wife of one man, well reported of for good works ; if she hath brought up children, if she hath used hospitality to strangers, if she hath washed the saints' feet, if she hath relieved the afflicted, if she hath diligently followed every good work " (*ib.* 9, 10).

Some further directions about the 'elders' or presbyters follow ;

Presbyters and their Bishop.	shewing that while all had some oversight, only some took part in preaching and teaching ; and shewing also that then, as now, the minister of the Church was a mark for slanderous tongues :
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“ Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially those who labour in the word and in teaching. For the scripture saith (Deut. xxv. 4) Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his hire.¹ Against an elder receive not an accusation, except at *the mouth of two or three witnesses* ” (*ib.* 17-19).

Scandal caused by a presbyter may easily involve the Bishop too, and so care must be taken in the choice of those to be ordained : “ Lay hands hastily on no man, neither be partaker of other men’s sins ”. A little personal caution, curiously, but very naturally, breaks the course of the letter : “ Be no longer a drinker of water, but use a little wine for thy stomach’s sake and thine often infirmities ” (*ib.* 23).

Another peril was rising in the altered position of the slave. Though still a slave legally, he was in the Church his master’s equal ; and this might lead the more ill-conditioned slave to treat his master disrespectfully. Slaves.

“ Let as many as are servants under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and the doctrine be not blasphemed. And they that have believing masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren ; but let them serve them the rather because they that partake of the benefit are believing and beloved ” (vi. 1, 2).

The last part of the epistle is chiefly occupied by warnings against the perils of covetousness and the desire of wealth. St. Paul connects this with the machinations of false teachers. The liberality of Christians and the undoubted right of the preacher to be maintained by his flock were already becoming a snare. Then, as now, to preach something contrary to the faith of the Church led to an easy notoriety, and at the back of it was often the desire for gain. Such men “ corrupted in mind, destitute of the truth ”, carry on their strife and controversy, “ supposing that godliness is a way of gain ”. The perils of wealth.

In contrast with this spirit, the Christian is reminded that his gains are of a different order, and that all he needs *here* is a sufficiency for the bodily life : “ But godliness with contentment

¹ This is apparently a quotation from the Gospel (St. Luke x. 7), quoted as “ Scripture ”. No doubt our Lord’s words were already written down, e.g. in the document of His sayings, called Q, used in both St. Matthew and St. Luke.

is great gain : for we brought nothing into the world, for neither can we carry anything out ; but having food and covering we shall be therewith content " (*ib.* 6-8).

Then follows a remarkable warning : " But they that desire to be rich fall into a temptation and a snare and many foolish and hurtful lusts, such as drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil : which some reaching after have been led astray from the faith, and have pierced themselves through with many sorrows " (*ib.* 9, 10).

In contrast with all that, Timothy is eloquently urged to aim at positive holiness and the fulfilment of his great vocation : " But thou, O man of God, flee these things ; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of the faith, lay hold on the life eternal, whereunto thou wast called, and didst confess the good confession ¹ in the sight of many witnesses " (*ib.* 11, 12).

As for those Christians who are already in possession of wealth, with all its perils, the Gospel has a special instruction for them : " Charge them that are rich in this present world, that they be not highminded, nor have their hope set on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy ; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, that they be ready to distribute, willing to communicate ; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on the life which is *life* indeed " (*ib.* 17-19).

Lastly, Timothy is again exhorted to keep the "trust committed to him", the sacred "deposit" of the Faith ; avoiding "profane babblings", and the opposition of "knowledge" falsely so called, a clear allusion to that spirit which was soon to appear as 'Gnosticism'.

Throughout this letter we cannot but notice the rapidity with which Church life and institutions must have been organised ; and the perils, often of quite modern type, which the tendencies of human nature were bringing already into view. (See Note, p. 200.) And we note also the insistence which the Apostle lays over and over again upon loyalty to 'the faith', the definite body of Christian truth committed to the Church,

¹ This appears to refer to the Baptismal profession of faith, which was the origin of the formal Creeds.

which calls not for controversy, but for obedience and religious effort.

The Epistle to Titus. Titus is unmentioned in the Acts, and we know nothing of him except that he is affectionately alluded to in 2 Cor. as St. Paul's envoy to the Corinthians, and in Galatians as having been his companion on a visit to Jerusalem, and the centre apparently of a controversy with the Judaizing party (p. 39). From that passage we learn that he was a Greek by race and apparently did not receive circumcision. He seems to have accompanied St. Paul on his last journey to the East, and to have been left by him in the island of Crete.

Titus.

In this epistle he is addressed (like Timothy) as 'my true child'. He was therefore one of St. Paul's own converts; and was placed in a position of trust and authority similar to that of Timothy. "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that were wanting, and appoint elders in every city, as I gave thee charge" (Tit. 1. 5).

In this position of Titus in the island of Crete, as in the case of Timothy at Ephesus, we see the beginnings of the episcopate, as distinct from the office of the apostles: but continuing their work of government, organisation, and ordination, and certainly superior in rank to the ordinary "elder".

The Apostle, after his preliminary greetings, gives instruction as to the choice of these elders or 'bishops' very similar to that given to Timothy, except that the elder is also described as "the steward of God", and special stress is laid on his responsibility for guarding and teaching the Faith: "holding to the faithful word which is according to the teaching, that he may be able both to exhort in the sound doctrine, and convict the gainsayers" (*ib.* 9).

Dangers
in Crete.

This was especially necessary in Crete, for false, self-seeking teachers were rife, chiefly Jewish, who were exerting a wide and evil influence, "overthrowing whole houses". St. Paul alludes to the well-known bad character of the people of Crete, and quotes with approval a verse of satire from the Cretan Epimenides;—

"Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, idle gluttons". These false teachers are very severely spoken of. They teach "Jewish fables, and commandments of men". From the words that follow it may be gathered that these commandments were of the nature

of ascetic restrictions, especially respecting clean and unclean meats : while the conduct of the teachers themselves was really fundamentally evil and immoral. "To the pure all things are pure : but to them that are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure ; but both their mind and their conscience are defiled. They profess that they know God ; but by their works they deny him, being abominable and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate " (*ib.* 15, 16).

In contrast with all this, Titus is bidden to teach his flock both by word and by his own example the solid Christian virtues of conduct. The aged of both sexes are to be instructed, in order that they may influence the younger : " That aged men be temperate, grave, soberminded, sound in faith, in love, in patience : that aged women likewise be reverent in demeanour, not slanderers nor enslaved to much wine, teachers of that which is good ; that they may train the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, *to be* soberminded, chaste, workers at home, kind, being in subjection to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed " (ii. 2-5).

The slaves also, here, as elsewhere in the later epistles, have to be warned against their own temptations, disloyalty, " gain-saying ", and petty thieving. Then the ideal of the Christian life, with its foundation of doctrine, is concisely drawn : " For the grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us, to the intent that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world ; looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ ; who gave himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a people for His own possession, zealous of good works ".

Having spoken of the conduct of the Church as viewed within, he now proceeds to sketch the right attitude of Christians to the government of the heathen society among which they live. They are to be subject to rulers, to obey magistrates : to be ready to do all good works, to be neither evil speakers nor quarrelsome, and to shew " all meekness toward all men ".

Then, in what might almost be a brief summary of the Epistle to the Romans, he portrays the old life of sin in which all had been

involved, its blindness, its enslavement to lust, its malice and envy, hateful and hating one another; and then the new life which has begun in Baptism. This fundamental change has sprung from the 'kindness' of God, His 'philanthropy': "not by works *done* in righteousness, which we did ourselves, but according to his mercy he saved us, through the washing¹ of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he poured out upon us richly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that, being justified by his grace, we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life".

The new
life of the
Baptized.

The statement about Baptism is remarkable: that sacrament is the means of 'regeneration', the new birth; and is accompanied by the 'renewing' or making new of human nature by the Holy Spirit—an allusion to the laying on of hands which followed Baptism.

From this change of state, good works must of necessity follow. They are "profitable unto men": not so "the foolish questions, and genealogies", and legal controversies of the false teachers, which are "unprofitable and vain". With such men Titus is not to shrink from using the apostolic authority given him. "A man that is heretical" (*i.e.* who persists in his deliberate rejection of the teaching of the Church) "after a first and second admonition refuse", *i.e.* cast him out of the communion of the Church.

The epistle ends with some personal matters. Titus may expect to be relieved shortly of his charge in Crete, either by Artemas (unknown) or Tychicus. He is then to come to St. Paul at Nicopolis (in Epirus), where he had determined to spend the winter. He is instructed also to assist "Zenas the lawyer and Apollos", by providing them with all necessities for their 'journey'. The closing exhortation reiterates the constant teaching of the epistle, good 'works' rather than talking and controversy are to be the aim of Christians "that they be not unfruitful".

Personal.

¹ Literally, the 'laver' or 'font'.

CHAPTER XVII

THE SECOND IMPRISONMENT : THE FINAL LETTER

'Twas thus the yearning faith of Saints,
The unconquered hope that never faints,
The love of Christ that knows not shame,
The prince of this world overcame.

THE last events in St. Paul's life can only be surmised from the Second Epistle to Timothy, and from Roman tradition ; the latter no doubt in part resting upon the former. The Neronian Persecution. The Apostle was apparently in Macedonia, perhaps at Nicopolis, when the long arm of Caesar reached him. The first Roman persecution had broken out. Nero, to divert from himself the blame of a fire which he is said to have kindled himself for theatrical effect, threw it upon the Christians, whose secrecy had already made them marks for general dislike and suspicion. A number of them were put to death in horrible ways, worried by wild beasts or burnt to death in the Vatican gardens. Apparently it was in connection with this outbreak that a warrant was issued for the arrest of the man who had been accused a few years before as " a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes ". He was brought again to Rome, and in the interval between his first and second trial before Nero, he wrote to Timothy the Second Epistle.

It was a dark hour for him, not that he feared death, but because the terror caused by these happenings had scattered St. Paul or alienated almost all his chief friends and fellow-forsaken. workers. " All they which are in Asia ", he says, " turned away from me ". He mentions some by name, Phygelus, and Hermogenes ; also Demas, one of the companions of the

first imprisonment, who, he sadly says, "forsook me, having loved this present world"; he had gone to Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia; Titus to Dalmatia (it is not clear whether this was a 'forsaking', or was in accordance with the Apostle's own instructions; Erastus was at Corinth; Trophimus had been left sick at Miletus; St. Luke alone, faithful to the end, remained with him. Even the Roman Christians were afraid to give him their support: "At my first defence, no one took my part". And he had a special enemy, one "Alexander the coppersmith". St. Peter is not mentioned, though constant tradition makes him a sufferer in the same persecution.

St. Paul's purpose in this letter to Timothy is in the first place to beg him with all speed to come to him at Rome, "before winter"; and with him to bring St. Mark: "he is useful to me for ministering". St. Mark's later labours had effaced the memory of his former lapse. The Apostle, even in the face of death, was eager again to work in Rome for the Gospel, and St. Mark had been recognised even during the first imprisonment as a fit person to share in it. But besides these personal reasons, it is quite clear from the tone of the letter that St. Paul was not without some anxiety as to Timothy's own steadfastness. The solemn and persistent exhortations to stand fast in the faith, and to accept suffering, mark a distinct change of tone from the first epistle.

The letter opens with these earnest charges to perseverance and to loyalty to the Faith: "Be not ashamed therefore of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but suffer hardship with the gospel according to the power of God. . . . Hold the pattern of sound words which thou hast heard from me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. That good thing which was committed unto thee guard through the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us" (2 Tim. i. 8, 13, 14). And several appealing motives are suggested; the Apostle's own deep love and constant prayer for Timothy; the recollection of the piety of his own family: "having been reminded of the unfeigned faith that is in thee; which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and, I am persuaded, in thee also" (*ib.* 5).

Then, too, there is the fact of the ordination gift which Timothy has received and its true character. "I put thee in remembrance

The
Second
Epistle to
Timothy.

Motives
for Perse-
verance.

that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee through the laying on of my hands. For God gave us not a spirit of fearfulness ; but of power and love and discipline " (*ib.* 6, 7).

The very nature of the Gospel, and the call to be a minister of the Gospel, are the strongest motives not to shrink, even in the prospect of what men call death ; for Jesus Christ " abolished death and brought life and incorruption to light through the gospel ". This is the strength of St. Paul himself amidst all his sufferings : " I know him whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to guard that which I have committed unto him ¹ against that day " (*ib.* 12).

Lastly, amidst the general defection, there is the bright example of one Christian, now apparently dead, Onesiphorus, who had sought him out diligently in his Roman prison and " oft refreshed " him ; and had also at Ephesus shewn similar care and kindness. The family of Onesiphorus were still at Ephesus and are prayed for, and also greeted in the conclusion of the letter ; but that he himself was dead is shewn by the words, unique in the New Testament and illustrating the primitive attitude of Christians towards the departed : " The Lord grant unto him to find mercy of the Lord in that day ".

From such considerations as these, the Apostle goes to enforce again the lesson of steadfastness : " Thou therefore, my child, be strengthened in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things which thou hast heard from me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. Suffer hardship with *me*, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus " (2 Tim. ii. 1-3). Warfare and labour are for the sake of Christ's people, for whom St. Paul himself is in chains, suffering as an evil-doer. But the end is worth all the suffering. He quotes as " a faithful saying " from what is apparently a Christian hymn :

If we died with Him
We shall also live with Him :
If we endure,
We shall also reign with Him :
If we shall deny Him,
He also will deny us :
If we are faithless,
He abideth faithful.

¹ Or that which he has committed to me—*i.e.* the trust of the Faith.

Timothy is warned against false teachers, who were stirring up controversy, striving "about words, to no profit", whose teaching will "eat as doth gangrene". Of these he mentions two, Hymenaeus and Philetus, who were overthrowing the faith of some by saying "that the resurrection is past already". This leads him to a little digression about the nature of the Church. It is God's 'foundation', standing sure for 'the Lord moveth them that are his'. Nevertheless, it can be no matter of surprise that it contains unworthy members: "In a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some unto honour, and some unto dishonour. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, meet for the master's use, prepared unto every good work" (ii. 20, 21).

Activity
of False
Teachers.

Holiness, not controversy, is the aim of the Church and her ministers. "Flee, youthful lusts, but follow righteousness, faith, love, peace"—"but foolish and ignorant questionings refuse". And it is not by argument and strife that the servant of Christ will win those who oppose the truth—gentleness, meekness, patience, readiness to teach will be his weapons—in the hope that God will grant repentance and recovery from the snare of the devil (pride) to those whom he has taken captive.

But as at Miletus (p. 134), so now, the Apostle as he looks into the future can see no rosy picture of progress and success. Perilous times are coming, in which men will try to cloak under 'a form of godliness' an unconverted life, full of all the sins of heathenism—"lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God". The Church was already experiencing such people, and in one stinging sentence the Apostle describes the sort of hearers who were at hand to be influenced by them. "For of these are they that creep into houses, and take captive silly women laden with sins, led away by divers lusts, ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (iii. 6, 7).

Evil Days
coming.

He compares these hypocritical teachers to the Egyptian magicians, quoting from Jewish tradition the names of two, 'Jannes and Jambres', who 'withstood Moses', and predicts for them a like confusion. But though individual evil-doers are exposed, the future will still bring forth a plentiful supply of such people. St. Paul's own persecutions, to which he here alludes,

at Antioch, at Iconium, Lystra (places well known to Timothy), are only the type of what all who desire to live a Christian life must expect; and "Evil men and imposters shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived". Timothy will find his strength in the apostolic faith and in the Holy Scriptures. "But abide thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a babe thou hast known the sacred writings which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (iii. 14, 15). And he adds a remarkable testimony to the value of these Scriptures (the Old Testament). "Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work" (*ib.* 16, 17).

These gloomy prospects of heresy and hypocrisy, so far from leading the minister of Christ to despair or sloth, must be his very incentive to vigour: "I charge *thee* in the sight of God, and of Christ Jesus, who shall judge the quick and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom; preach the word; be instant in season, out of season;¹ reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and teaching" (iv. 1-2).

These exhortations to Timothy are pointed by the Apostle's conviction that his own career on earth is almost over. To the **St. Paul's** Philippians he had expressed his own readiness to be **Farewell.** poured out as a libation on the sacrifice. Now it is almost upon him: "I am already being poured out, and the time of my putting out to sea is close at hand". But some clearer conviction has come upon him of his own ultimate salvation than when he wrote to the Philippians: "I count not myself to have apprehended". Now "some dawning glories of the eternal day" are brightening his last steps on earth: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day: and not only to me, but also to all them that have loved his appearing" (iv. 7, 8).

¹ *I.e.* both when there appears a favourable opportunity and also when there does not.

So again when he thinks sadly of the Roman Christians who were afraid to support him in Nero's judgment hall, and prays (remembering St. Stephen) that it may "not be laid to their account", he recalls the Divine strength given him: "the Lord stood by me and strengthened me," and adds with the certainty of faith, "and the Lord will deliver me from every evil work, and will save me unto His heavenly Kingdom".

Besides the references to friends, faithful and faithless, already mentioned, Timothy is given one little personal commission: "The cloke that I left at Troas with Carpus, bring when thou comest, and the books, especially the parchments" (*ib.* 13). This was probably a travelling cloak, the Roman *paenula*, a heavy garment put on over the head which would be useful in the coming winter: the 'books' would be on sheets of papyrus; the parchments (more durable) probably were copies of the Scriptures.

Salutations are sent to Prisca (Priscilla) and Aquila, now again apparently at Ephesus, and to the household of Onesiphorus. And some of the Roman Christians, in spite of their fears, had evidently visited the Apostle in his dungeon: they send greetings, Eubulus, Pudens, Linus, Claudia; Linus is probably the same as the Linus mentioned by Eusebius as the first bishop of Rome. Pudens and Claudia *may* be the two whose wedding Martial (*iv.* 13) alludes to, he being a centurion of high repute, and she a 'peregrine' or foreigner, and as some have conjectured, a British maiden. Once more, for the last time, the characteristic Pauline good wish of 'grace' closes the letter.

It is not known whether either Timothy or St. Mark reached the Apostle before his death. There is an allusion to the latter in 1 St. Peter v. 13 (written from 'Babylon', *i.e.* Rome), and to Timothy in Heb. xiii. 23. Tradition makes Timothy a martyr at Ephesus many years later.

St. Paul was a second time put on trial, and this time condemned to death. Being a Roman citizen he suffered the more honourable death of beheading by the sword. Both the year and the day are uncertain. It was probably in the winter of 64-5. The Church commemorates his martyrdom on the same day as that of St. Peter, June 29. The place was probably that pointed out by tradition, outside the

The
Martyr-
dom.

Ostian Gate, near where now stands the magnificent basilica of St. Paul-outside-the-Walls: in which his bones undoubtedly still rest. The spot is called The Fontane, from the legend that "three fountains" of water sprang up miraculously as his head fell to the ground. Tradition, though of doubtful value, makes St. Peter confined in the same dungeon with him, the underground and horrible 'Tullianum', the old prison of Republican Rome, and condemned to die on the same day. The picturesque story describes them led out together to die, until they reached the parting of their ways, St. Peter to suffer the death of a slave by crucifixion, and St. Paul to be beheaded. A little wayside chapel marks the traditional spot of their farewell, which bears inscriptions that may fittingly close our record: "And Paul said to Peter, 'Peace be with thee, Foundation of the Church, Shepherd of the flock of Christ'. And Peter said to Paul, 'Go in peace, Preacher of good tidings, and Guide of the salvation of the just'".

Authenticity of the Pastoral Epistles. The ancient Church apparently from the first accepted these three epistles as genuine. They were never seriously attacked until the nineteenth century. Doubts have since been raised on such grounds as the obvious difficulty of finding a place for them in St. Paul's life; the still more obvious variation in style and vocabulary from the rest of his undoubted epistles, and the difficulty, as it appears to some, of supposing that either Church institutions or heretical systems had reached such a stage of development as alluded to in the epistles, within St. Paul's own lifetime.

If we assume that early tradition is correct as to St. Paul's release from his first Roman imprisonment and a subsequent missionary period, the difficulty of time and place largely disappears. The rapid growth of Church institutions, *e.g.* the ministerial offices and the roll of widows, is not very surprising if we realise at all the extraordinary life and enthusiasm of the apostolic Church. And there are parallel instances even in modern times. As for the heresies and false teachers alluded to, a study of the intellectual atmosphere of the first century A.D. and of the rapid growth and spread of the Gnostic systems will easily supply a sufficient explanation. The differences of style and especially of vocabulary are the only serious objection to the epistles. These

differences are very much on the surface. They consist chiefly of unusual words and often repeated phrases, *e.g.* "Faithful is the saying": 'godly' and 'godliness' as descriptions of the Christian life and character, and 'sound' or 'wholesome' (lit. 'healthy') as applied to theology and morality. But in the case of some writers, style does vary very much with time and circumstance; especially would it be likely to do so with one like St. Paul, whose character was quick and versatile and whose experiences had been so full, so strange, and so strenuous. He might very easily and quickly develop various mannerisms from time to time, or pick up phrases from his constant companions. For example, St. Luke was a physician: what more natural than that he should have often applied the word 'healthy' to religious soundness (cf. St. Luke xv. 27), and that St. Paul unconsciously copied him? On the other hand, the personal passages in the epistles are very like St. Paul; and the whole tone is perfectly in harmony with his other writings.¹ And if the Pastorals are forgeries, they are the work of one who had sufficient ability to imitate St. Paul in a manner quite worthy of him, and yet was not sufficiently acute to avoid obvious discrepancies with his earlier style, *e.g.* 'grace, mercy and peace' instead of the usual 'grace and peace'. And besides, he has invented a large number of personal details which serve no purpose for a forgery, and yet are in themselves remarkably natural. In conclusion, without minimising the surface differences between these epistles and the early ones, to ascribe them to a forger really involves greater difficulties than to believe with the Catholic Church of all the ages that they are truly the work of St. Paul.

The Epistle to the Hebrews. The traditional ascription of this epistle to St. Paul stands in quite a different category from the case of the Pastoral Epistles. The early Church was entirely in doubt as to the authorship of Hebrews. It was not generally ascribed to St. Paul in the East till the fourth century, and the Western Church followed suit, partly through the influence of the East, and partly because it was thought that an epistle could not be considered authoritative and canonical unless it was the work of an undoubted Apostle. The early traditions and conjectures

¹ On this question of vocabulary, see the very temperate and balanced study in the *New Commentary*, pp. 579-581.

are very interesting. Tertullian at the end of the second century ascribed it to St. Barnabas, and this was apparently a Western tradition. St. Clement of Alexandria believed it was the work of St. Paul, translated by St. Luke. Origen said : " Who wrote it God only knows certainly ". He mentions St. Paul, St. Luke, and St. Clement of Rome as possible authors. Later suggestions are Apollos (Luther) and Priscilla (Harnack). Perhaps the best suggestion is St. Luke, whose style most resembles the finished and beautiful Greek of the epistle. At any rate, it must have been written by someone in the immediate circle of St. Paul, one who had taken in St. Paul's teaching, but developed it in his own way. The main lines of the epistle bear the unmistakable impress of Pauline thought : the concentration of attention on the Person of Christ, and His sovereignty ; the subtle development of the inner meaning of the Old Testament ; the grasp of the universality and finality of the Gospel. But, on the other hand, besides the obvious absence of the personal note in the writer (so very unlike St. Paul), there are wider and deeper differences. The whole treatment is bold and original, and the conception of the high-priesthood of Christ is almost entirely a new one. These facts, taken along with the notable absence of early traditional authority, make it almost certain that St. Paul was not directly the author of this great and profound epistle.

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